オールドボーイ

ルーズ戦記

OLDBOY

Garon
TSUCHIYA

Nobuaki
MINEGISHI

Volume

5

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ルーズ戦記

OLDBOY

publisher
MIKE RICHARDSON

editor
CHRIS WARNER

collection designer
DARIN FABRICK

art director
LIA RIBACCHI

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OLD BOY Vol. 5

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story by
GARON TSUCHIYA

art by
NOBUAKI MINEGISHI

translatian
KUMAR SIVASUBRAMANIAN

lettering and retouch
MICHAEL DAVID THOMAS

DARK HORSE MANGA™

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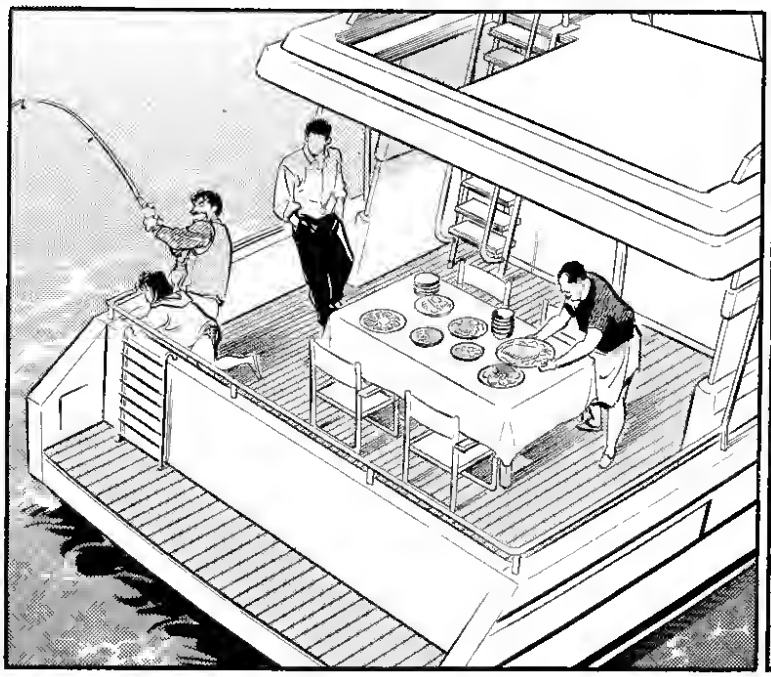
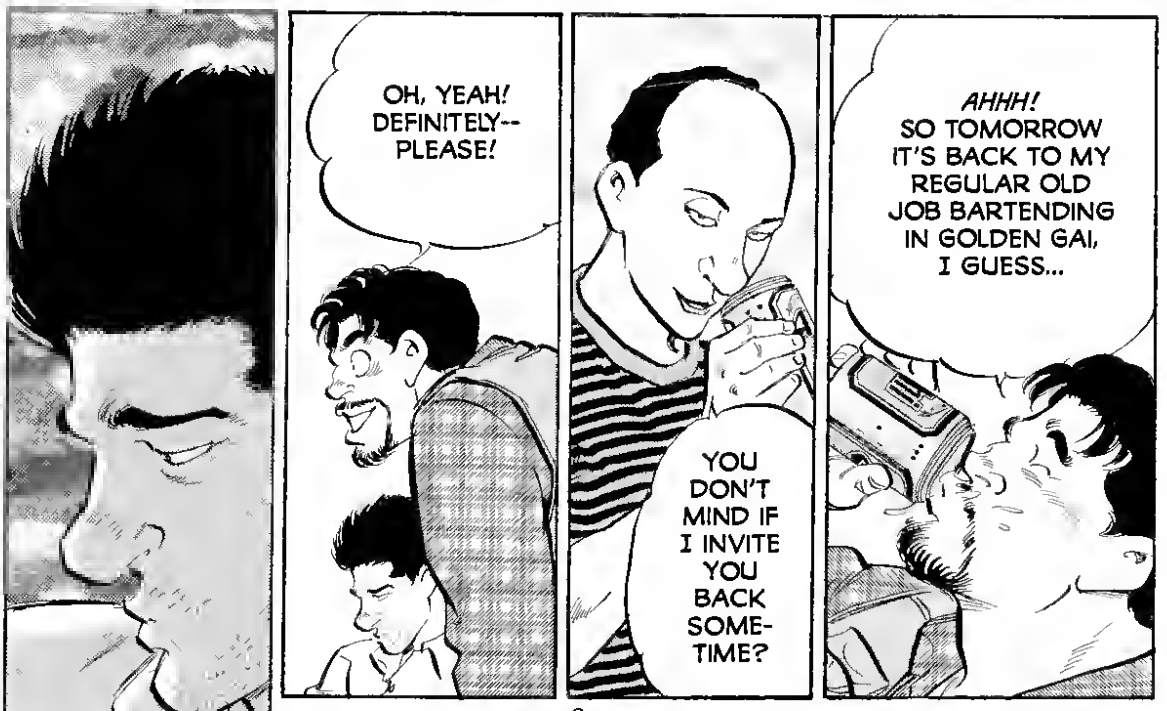
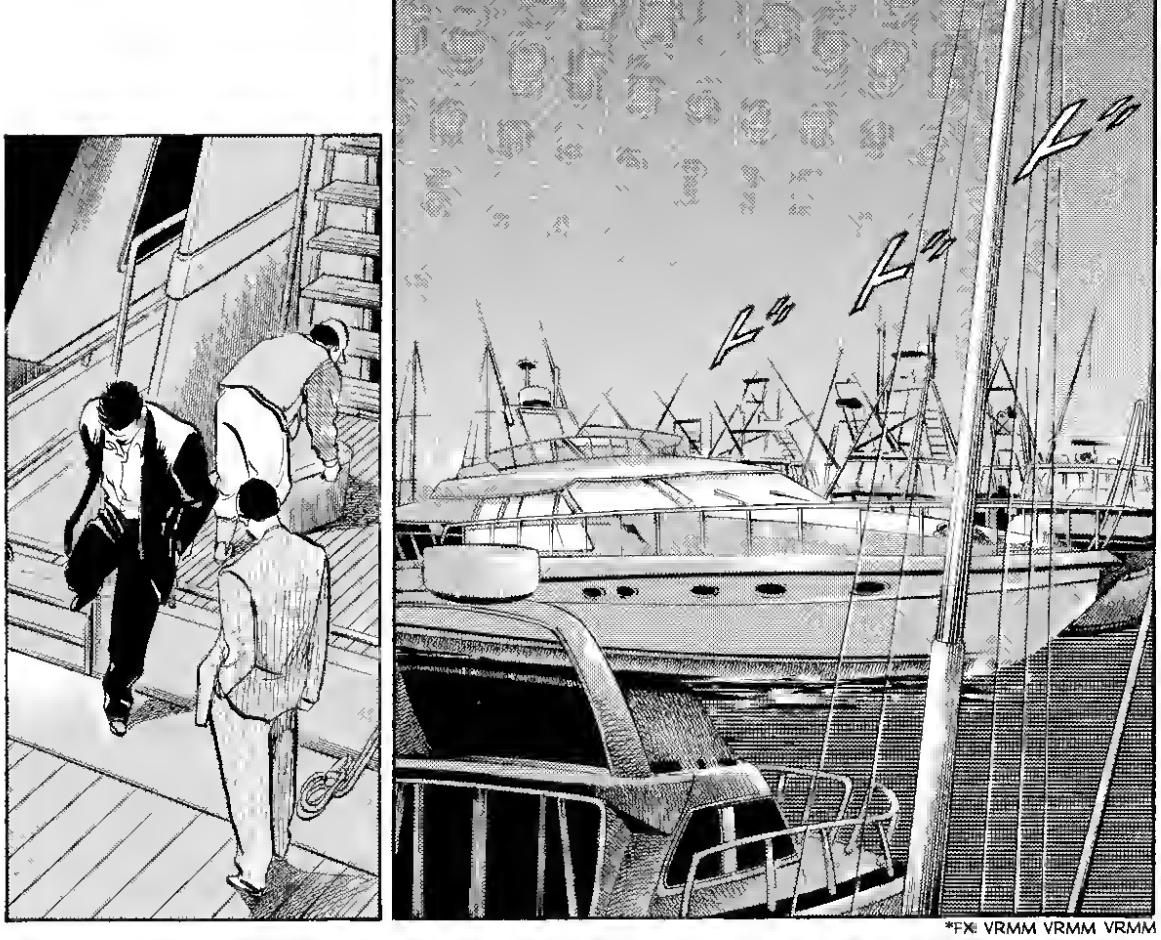
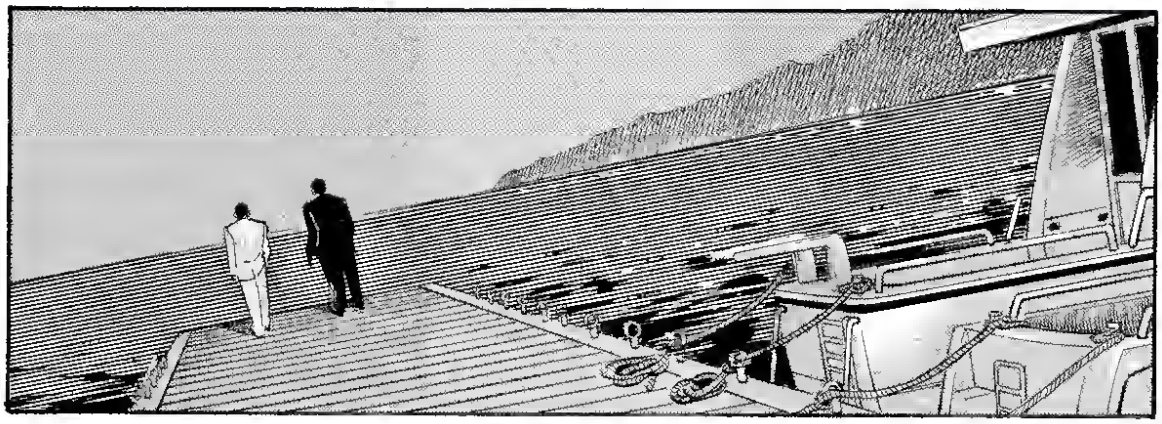
第40話●見届け人
CHAPTER 40
THE OBSERVER

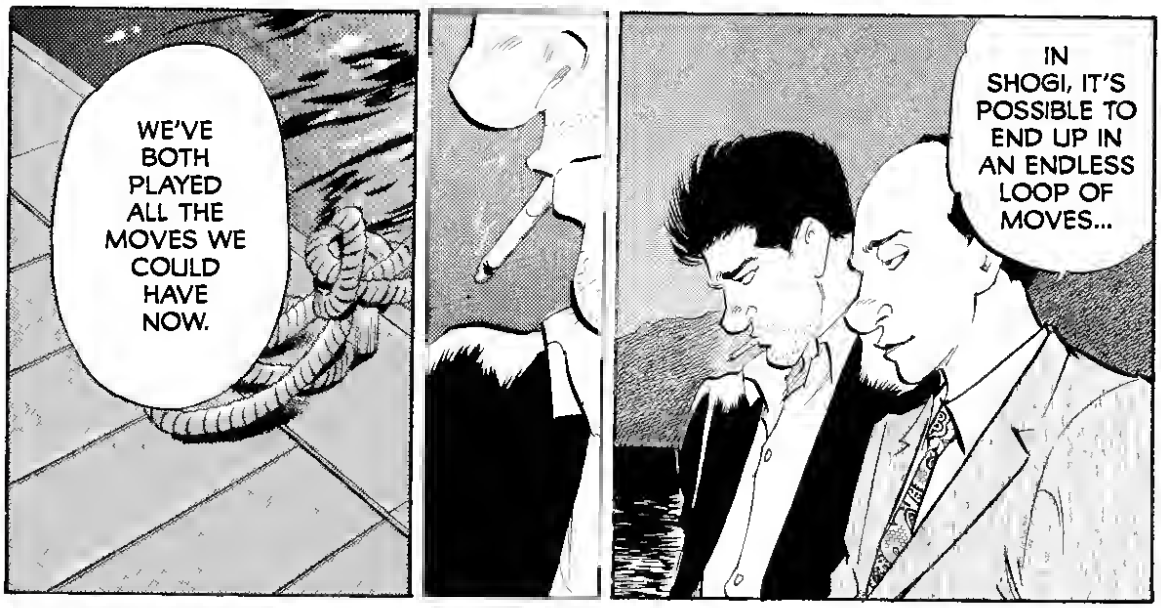



OH, YEAH! DEFINITELY-- PLEASE!
YOU DON'T MIND IF I INVITE YOU BACK SOME-TIME?
AHHH! SO TOMORROW IT'S BACK TO MY REGULAR OLD JOB BARTENDING IN GOLDEN GAI, I GUESS...

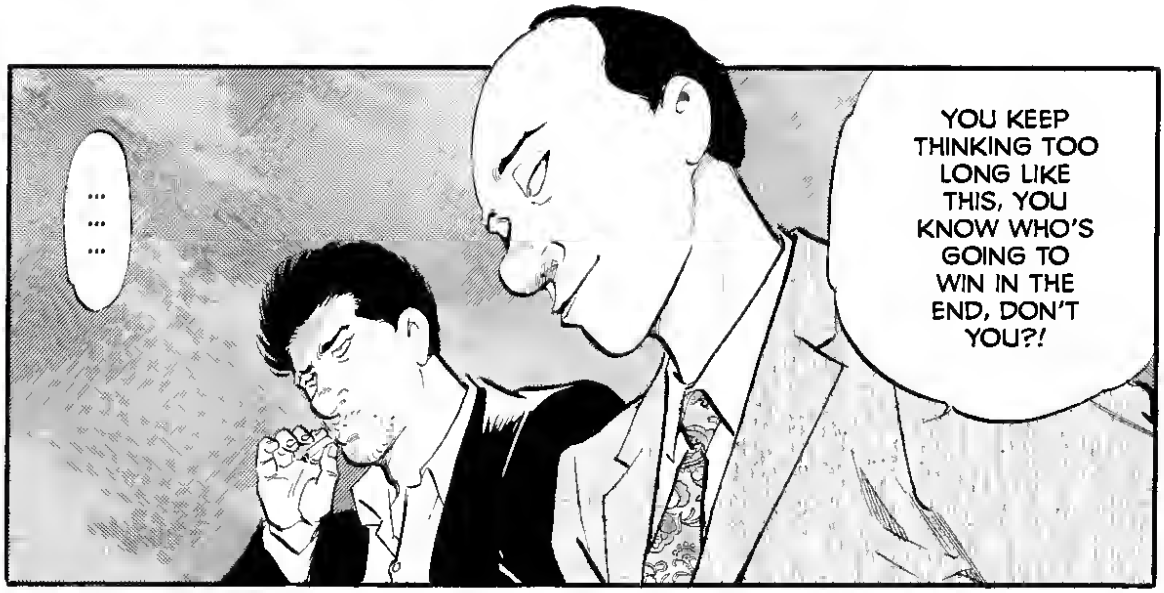


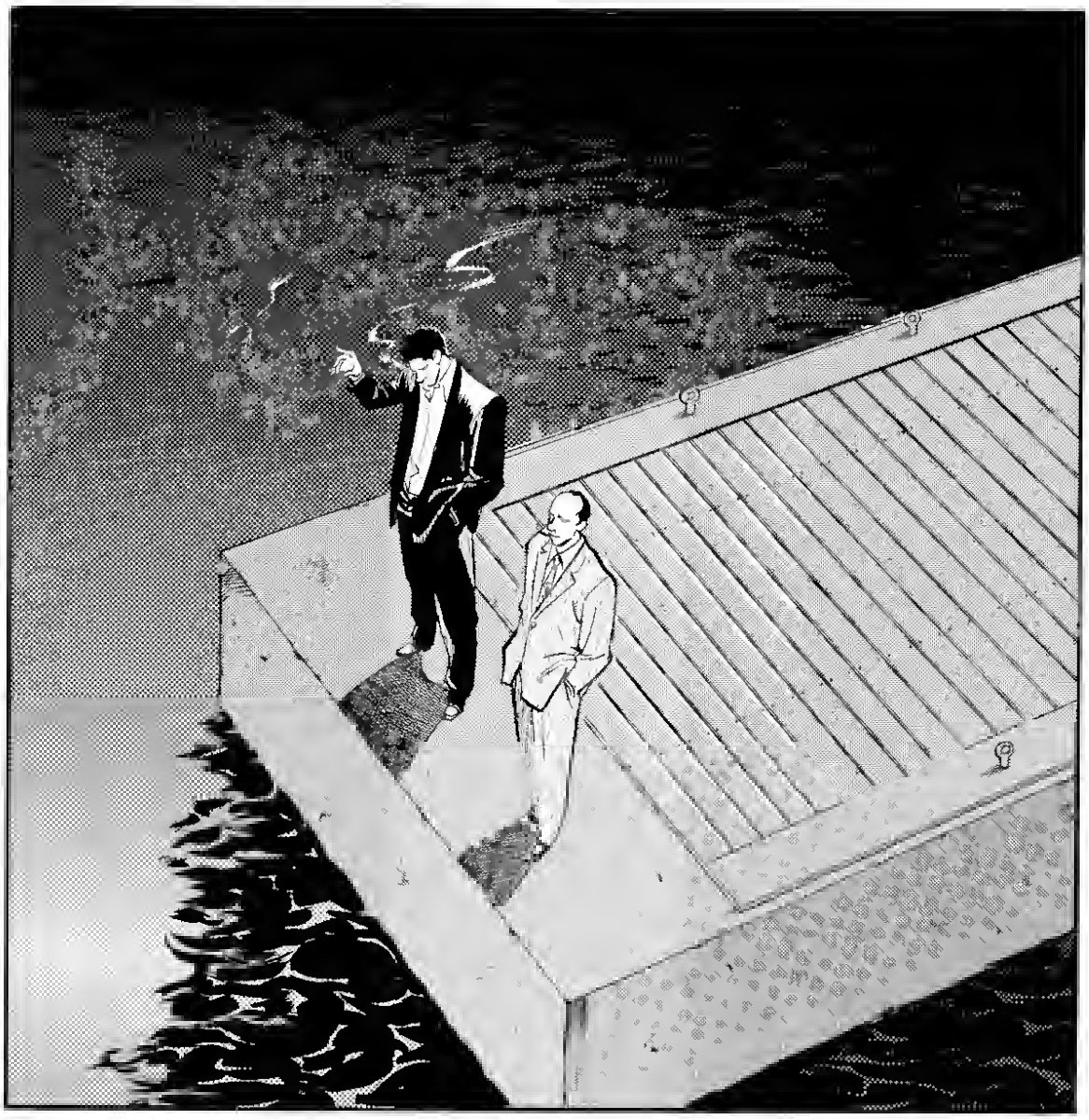
*FX: VRMM VRMM VRMM

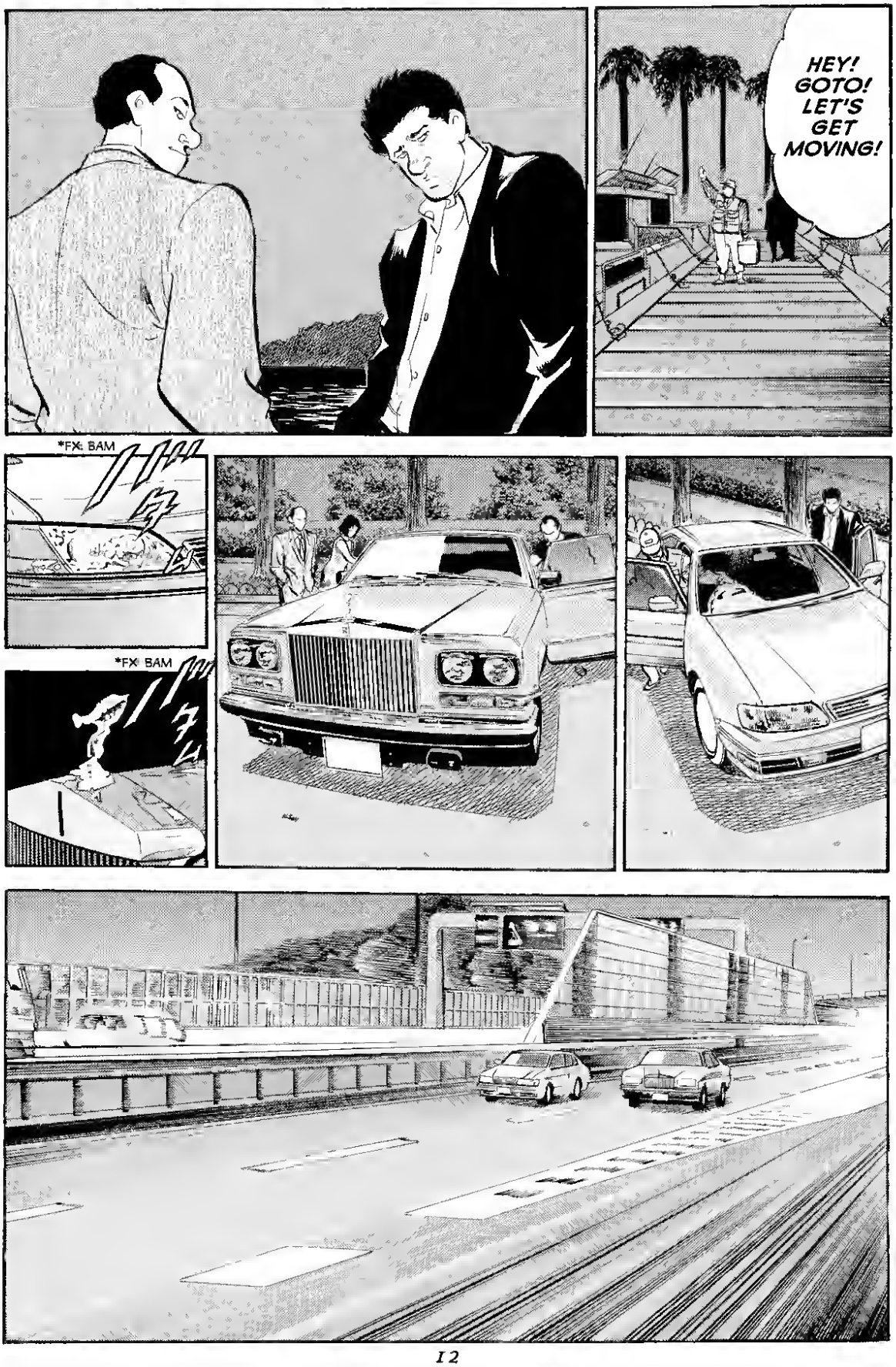


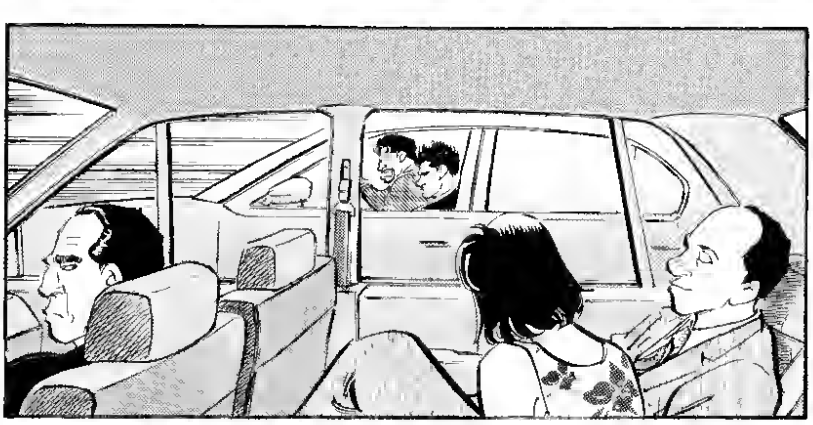

WE'VE BOTH PLAYED ALL THE MOVES WE COULD HAVE NOW.
IN SHOGI, IT'S POSSIBLE TO END UP IN AN ENDLESS LOOP OF MOVES...

...BUT YOU STILL DON'T REMEMBER ME.
YOU'VE AGREED TO PLAY THIS *GAME* ALONG WITH ME...
...AND I'VE REVEALED TO YOU THAT I USED TO BE A *CLASSMATE* OF YOURS...

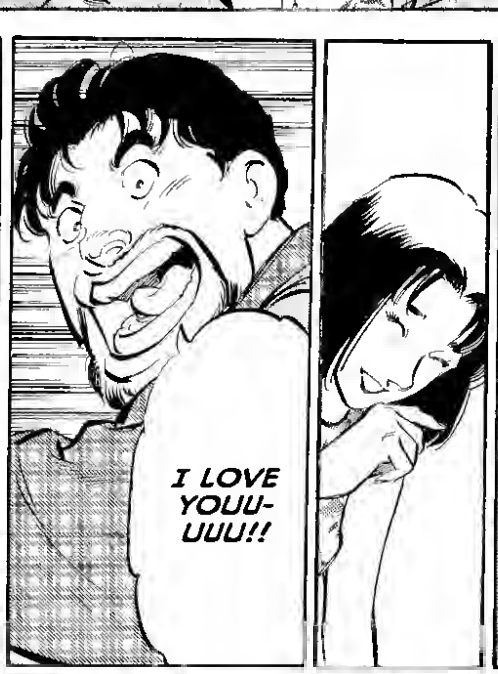

...
...
...
YOU KEEP THINKING TOO LONG LIKE THIS, YOU KNOW WHO'S GOING TO WIN IN THE END, DON'T YOU?!




HEY! GOTO! LET'S GET MOVING!
*FX: BAM
*FX: BAM



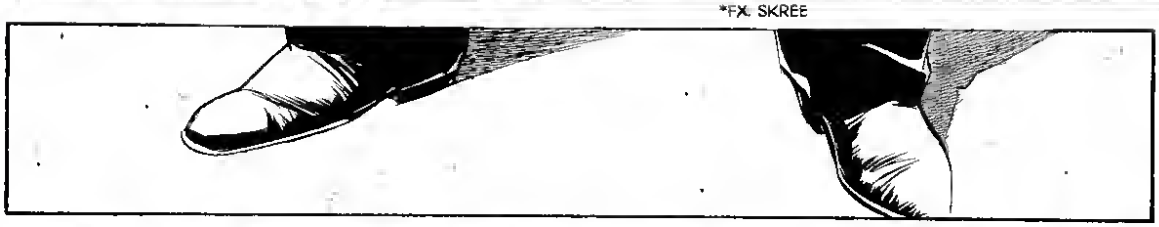
*FX: VRRMMM

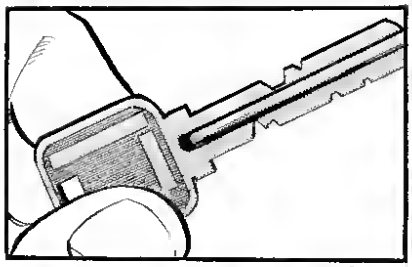


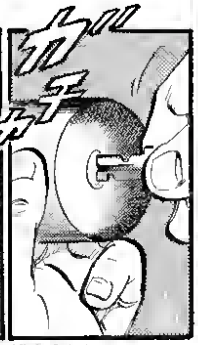
48
WHUH?! DID THEY SAY ANYTHING TO YOU...?!
THEY MUST BE GOING TO A SUMMER HOUSE SOMEWHERE OR SOMETHING!!
MAN! THAT WOMAN...!
AND I GOT HER MOBILE NUMBER OFF OF HER, TOO!
WHENEVER SHE SHOWS UP AT MOON DOG, SHE'S GOT THIS ADULT FASHION SENSE, COMES OFF ALL "GROWN-UP" LIKE...
...BUT SHE'S A MODERN GAL, AFTER ALL!

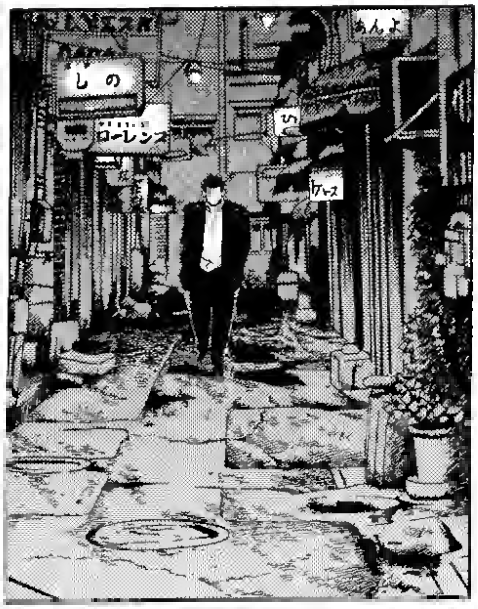
*HONNK
*HONNK
*FX: SKREEE
*FX: VRRMMM
TSUKAMOTO'S ALREADY BEEN ROPED IN...
THANKS, MAN...
*FX: PHEW!

*FX. SKREE







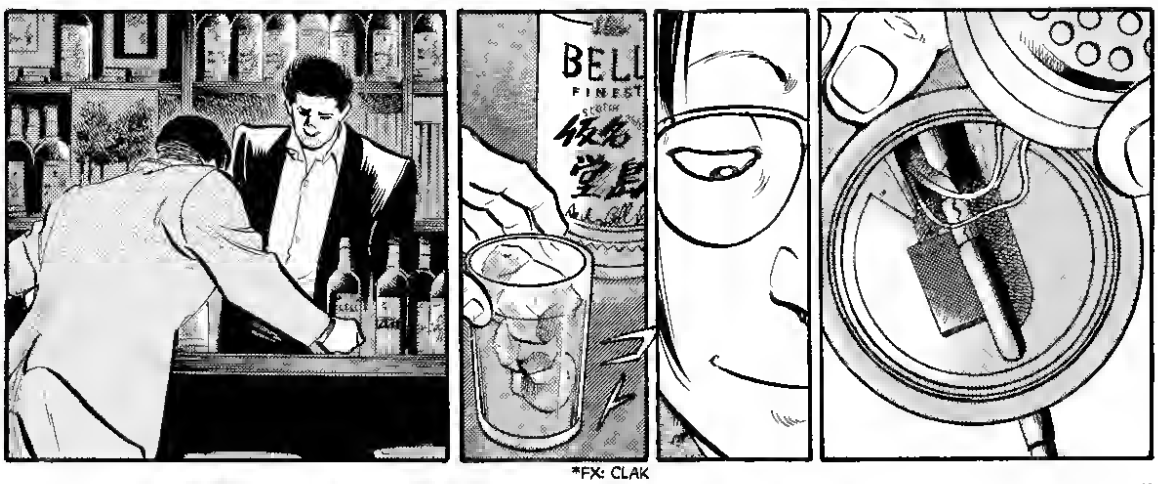


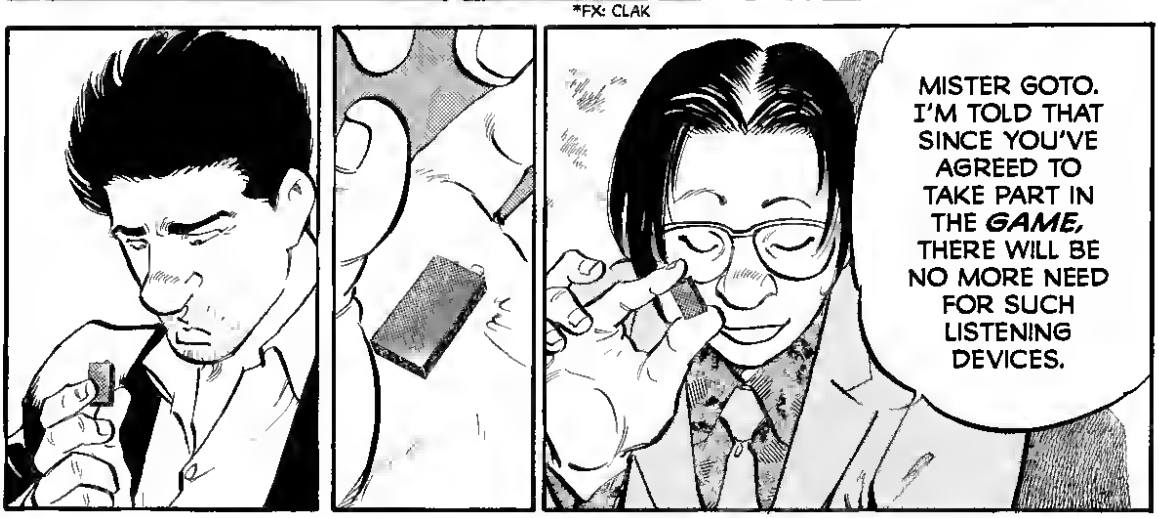
*FX: CHIK

WHO'S THERE...?!
WILD TURKEY

*FX: CLICK
カチ
THERE'S NO CAUSE FOR ALARM.
IT'S A DUPLI-CATE FOR THIS PLACE.
I'LL HAVE ALIAS DOJIMA'S BOTTLE, WITH WATER.

*FX: KRAK
*FX: WRRK WRRK
*FX: KRAK

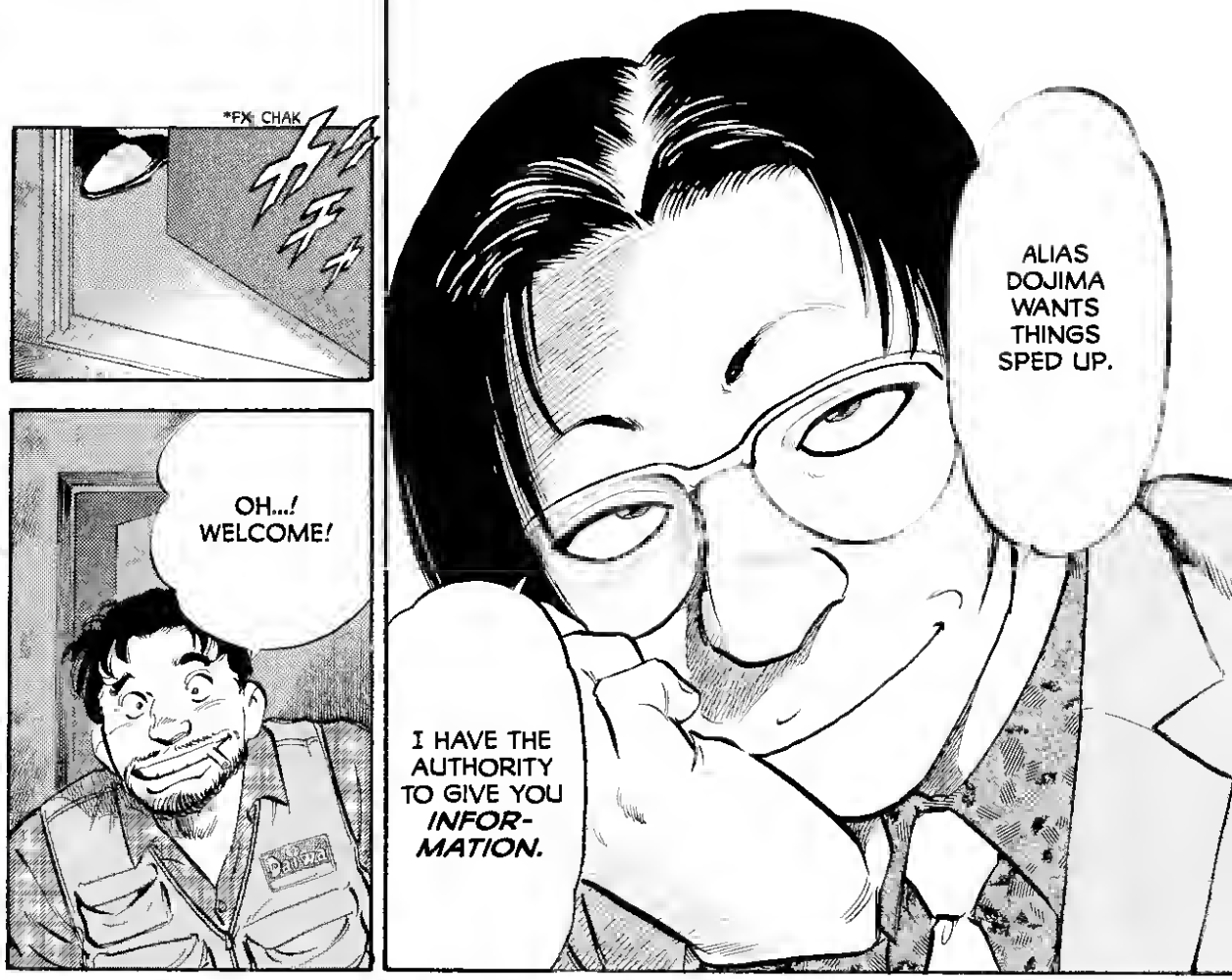

BELL
FINEST
*FX: CLAK

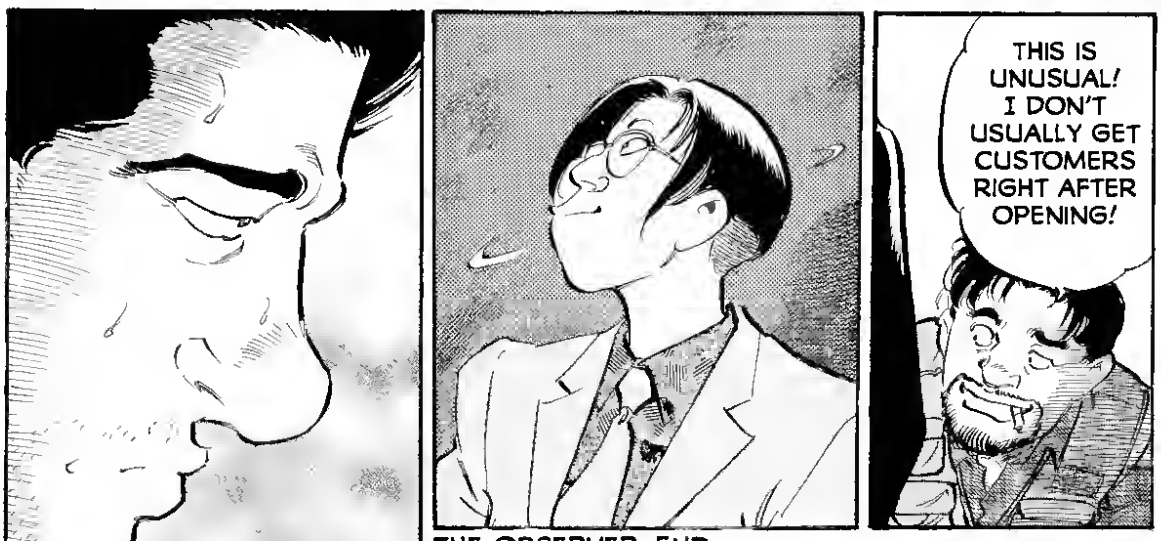

MISTER GOTO. I'M TOLD THAT SINCE YOU'VE AGREED TO TAKE PART IN THE GAME, THERE WILL BE NO MORE NEED FOR SUCH LISTENING DEVICES.

SO...
...WHO THE HELL ARE YOU?
BOTH THE SPARE KEY AND THE BUG IN THE PHONE...
...WERE THE WORK OF ONE OF ALIAS DOJIMA'S FINE STAFF. I HAD NO INVOLVEMENT.

...OR, YOU COULD SAY, AN *OBSERVER.*
A *REFEREE* HIRED BY ALIAS DOJIMA...

I'VE BEEN SENT TO MAKE SURE THE RESULT OF YOUR GAME IS JUDGED IMPARTIALLY, YOU SEE?





THE OBSERVER: END

CHAPTER 41

BEAST OF THE APOCALYPSE

第41話●默示獸

*FX YAWWN
AND HERE I WAS PLANNING TO JUST HAVE A QUICK DRINK AND GO STRAIGHT TO BED!
BELL'S
MUST BE GETTIN' OLD. I'M ALREADY SLEEPY FROM ALL THE EXCITEMENT.

*ON LABEL: ALIAS DOJIMA

*FX: SHRR
TSUKA-MOTO...
HMM?
IS THIS GUY PLANNING TO STAY HERE ALL NIGHT?!
*FX: GLANCE
GUESS NOT, HUH?
LEAVE ME IN CHARGE TONIGHT. THERE PROBABLY WON'T BE ANY MORE CUSTOMERS, SO...
*FX: HEH/
TECHNICALLY, WE'RE SUPPOSED TO CLOSE AROUND SIX A.M.!
OKAY, SEE YA LATER!
*FX: CHAK

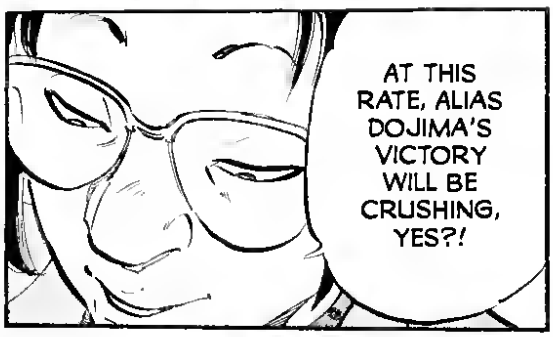
*FX: SPAASH
NICE ONE!

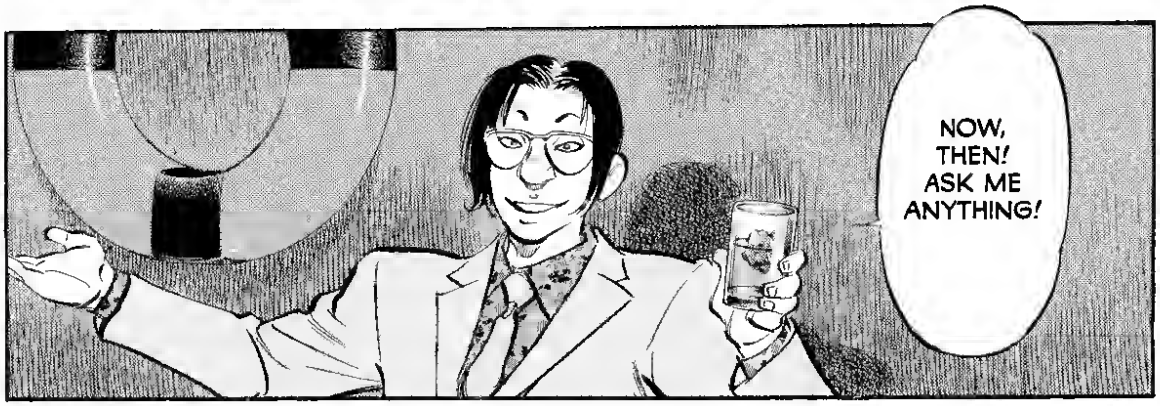
MISTER GOTO, THERE'S NO POINT TRYING TO PROVOKE ME.
I'M NOT A VIOLENT ENFORCER SENT BY SOME GANG.

DON'T YOU WANT THE INFOR-MATION I'VE GOT?
BELLS
I'VE GOT HINTS...TO HELP YOU REMEMBER THE POINT OF CONTACT BETWEEN YOU AND ALIAS DOJIMA.

*FX. CLAK

YOU MIGHT LIKE TO THINK OF ME AS A KIND OF *HANDI-CAPPER.*
MY JOB IS TO FINE-TUNE THINGS, BEING THE OBSERVER.

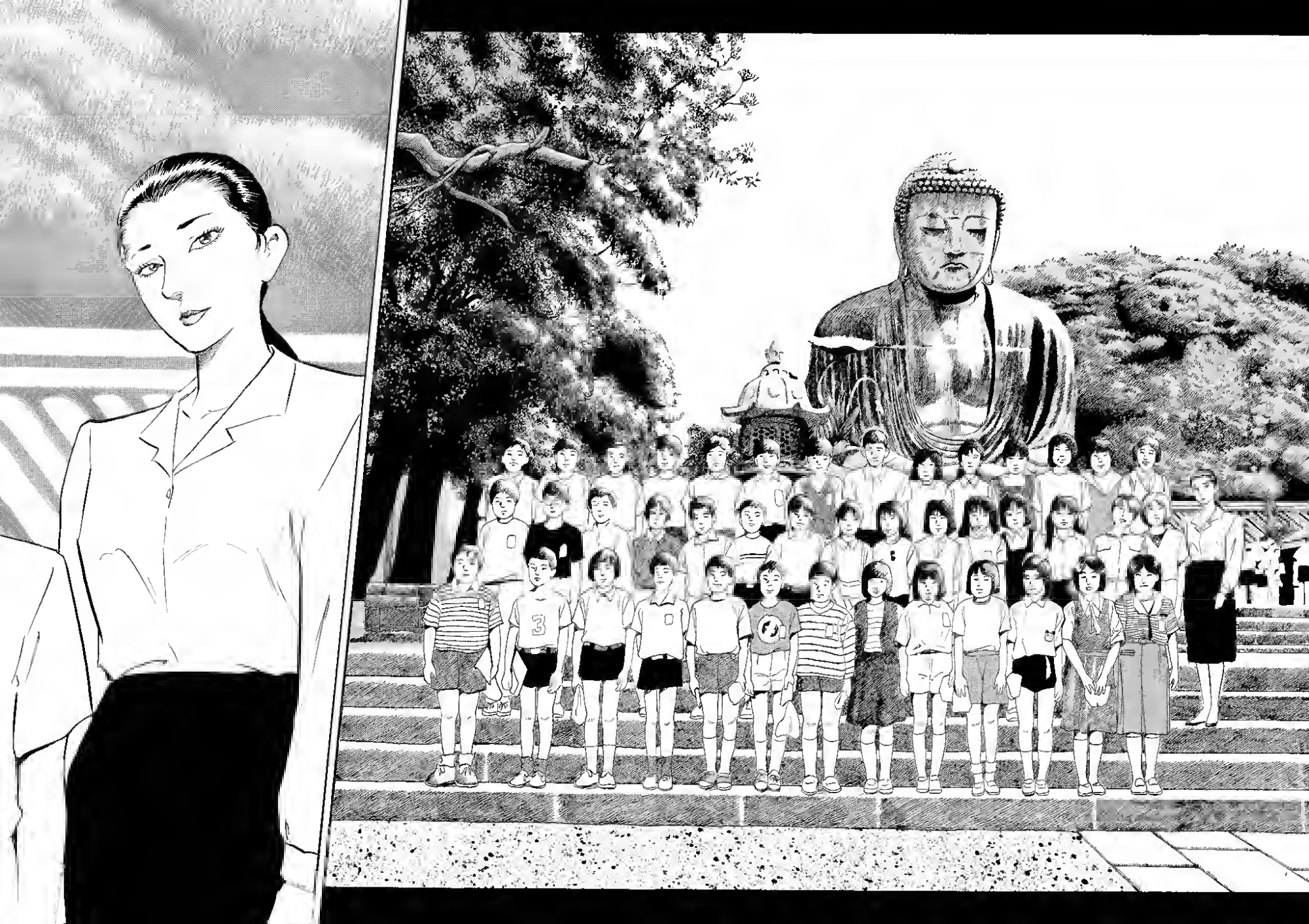

AT THIS RATE, ALIAS DOJIMA'S VICTORY WILL BE CRUSHING, YES?!


NOW, THEN! ASK ME ANYTHING!

NOW, IF IT WAS A TIME WHEN I WAS PRETTY MESSED UP...WOULD IT HAVE BEEN *HIGH SCHOOL?*
HE SAID HE WAS MY CLASS-MATE...
...
...
...
NO.
HE WAS YOUR CLASSMATE IN *ELEMEN-TARY SCHOOL.*

GRADE SIX. CLASS B...
ELEMEN-TARY SCHOOL...?
I'VE HEARD...YOU HAVE YOUR YEARBOOKS AROUND HERE SOMEWHERE, DON'T YOU?
THAT MUST NARROW THINGS DOWN QUITE A BIT, YES?
WELL?!
DO YOU WANT MORE HINTS?

*FX: CLACK
カタ
SHOW ME! SHOW ME!
...
...
...
*FX: BAM
GRADE SIX, CLASS B... HMM...



NOW, MISTER GOTO, WHERE ARE YOU...?
BELLS
REFILL PLEASE!
AS WATERED DOWN AS POSSIBLE.
FORTY-TWO STUDENTS IN GRADE SIX, CLASS B...
TWENTY FEMALE STUDENTS.

THAT LEAVES TWENTY-TWO MALE STUDENTS, OF WHICH ALIAS DOJIMA IS ONE.
'74

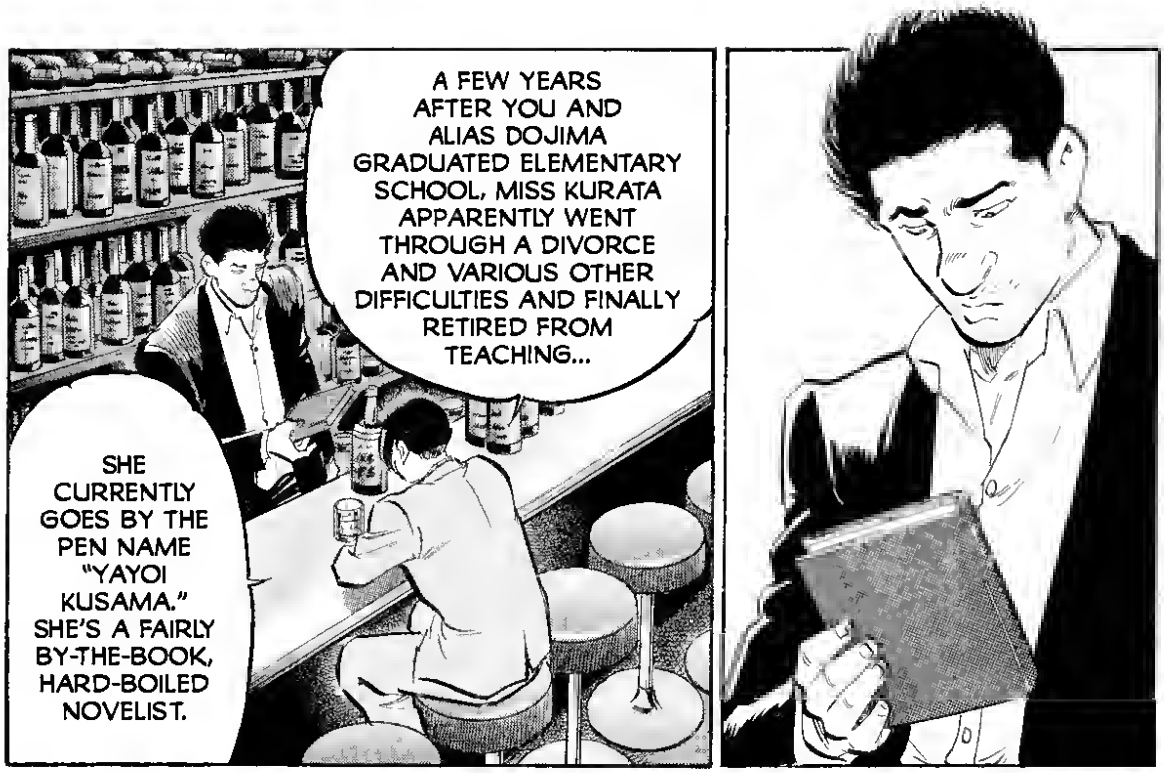
THE MEMORIES ARE SO DISTANT...
WHO WOULD BEAR SUCH A BOTTOM-LESS HATE AGAINST ME?!

DO YOU KNOW *EVERYTHING?*
DO YOU KNOW WHO ALIAS DOJIMA IS?
DO YOU KNOW HE LOCKED ME AWAY FOR TEN YEARS?!

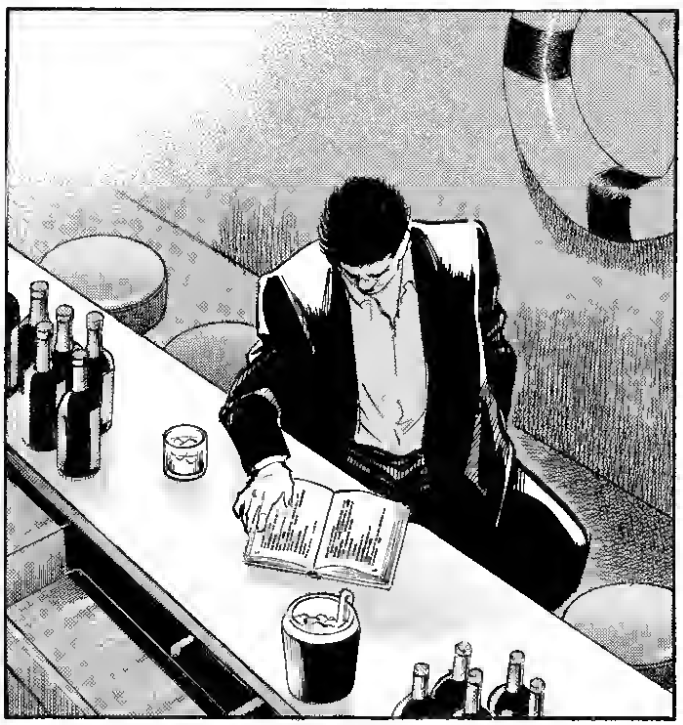
*FX: KLAK
THERE'S ONLY ONE THING I HAVEN'T BEEN TOLD.
...
...
...
NATU-RALLY.
WHAT THE "CERTAIN INCIDENT" WAS IN WHICH YOU SCARRED ALIAS DOJIMA'S MIND SO DEEPLY.
THAT'S ALL I DON'T KNOW.
CERTAIN INCIDENT ...?!

...WAS A WOMAN, RELATIVELY ATTRACTIVE, IN HER EARLY TWENTIES. DO YOU REMEMBER HER?
THE TEACHER OF THAT CLASS...

*FX: SHFF
MRS... YOKO KURATA...
WHAT WAS HER NAME?
*BOOK: BEAST OF THE APOCALYPSE, YAYOI KUSAMA
黙示獣
草間やよい


A FEW YEARS AFTER YOU AND ALIAS DOJIMA GRADUATED ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, MISS KURATA APPARENTLY WENT THROUGH A DIVORCE AND VARIOUS OTHER DIFFICULTIES AND FINALLY RETIRED FROM TEACHING...
SHE CURRENTLY GOES BY THE PEN NAME "YAYOI KUSAMA." SHE'S A FAIRLY BY-THE-BOOK, HARD-BOILED NOVELIST.

YES.
TO GIVE HIM A "HANDICAP," SO THE *GAME* CAN BE FAIR.
DID ALIAS DOJIMA TELL YOU TO SAY THAT?
PERHAPS YOU MIGHT BE ABLE TO GET SOME IMPORTANT INFORMATION FROM HER...?



BEAST OF THE APOCALYPSE: END

CHAPTER 42
FEMALE TEACHER

第42話●女性教師

8
黙示獣
草間やよい
HOPE

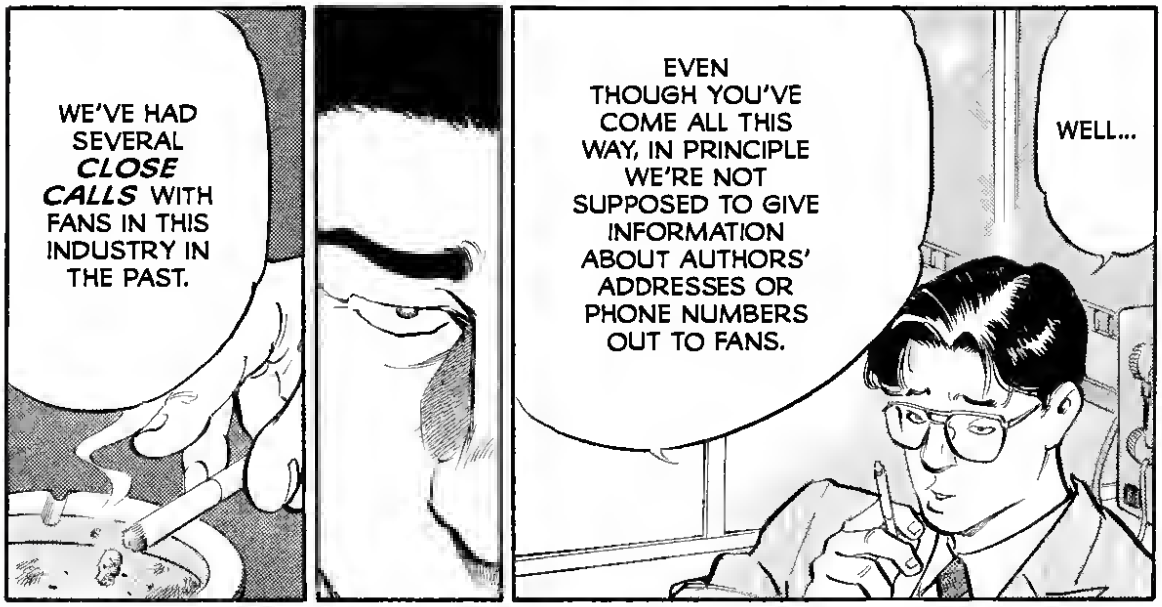
HE'S A HOPELESS CASE!
WHENEVER WE MEET ABOUT HIS NEW BOOK, HE JUST WANTS TO GO TO "GENTLEMEN'S CLUBS" ALL NIGHT!
DOESN'T MATTER, AS LONG AS ALL THOSE ENTERTAINMENT EXPENSES PAY OFF IN THE END!

*FX: BRRRING
YAYOI KUSAMA'S EDITOR?
HELLO. EDITORIAL DIVISION THREE.
CALL FROM RECEPTION!
MISTER HIRADO!
*FX: BEEP
HE'S DOWN THERE RIGHT NOW?
YAYOI KUSAMA'S CONTACT INFOR-MATION?
DOES HE... LOOK LIKE TROUBLE?

NOA

PLEASE, HAVE A SEAT.
GOTO.
MY NAME IS HIRADO. I'M YAYOI KUSAMA'S EDITOR.
THIS GUY DOESN'T LOOK LIKE A STALKER...
UHH...
I WAS WONDERING IF I COULD PLEASE HAVE CONTACT INFORMATION FOR THE NOVELIST YAYOI KUSAMA.
LET'S GET STRAIGHT TO IT, PLEASE...

PLEASE. IF YOU COULD.
I KNEW YOU'D PROBABLY REFUSE OVER THE PHONE, SO I CAME HERE IN PERSON.


WE'VE HAD SEVERAL CLOSE CALLS WITH FANS IN THIS INDUSTRY IN THE PAST.
EVEN THOUGH YOU'VE COME ALL THIS WAY, IN PRINCIPLE WE'RE NOT SUPPOSED TO GIVE INFORMATION ABOUT AUTHORS' ADDRESSES OR PHONE NUMBERS OUT TO FANS.
WELL...

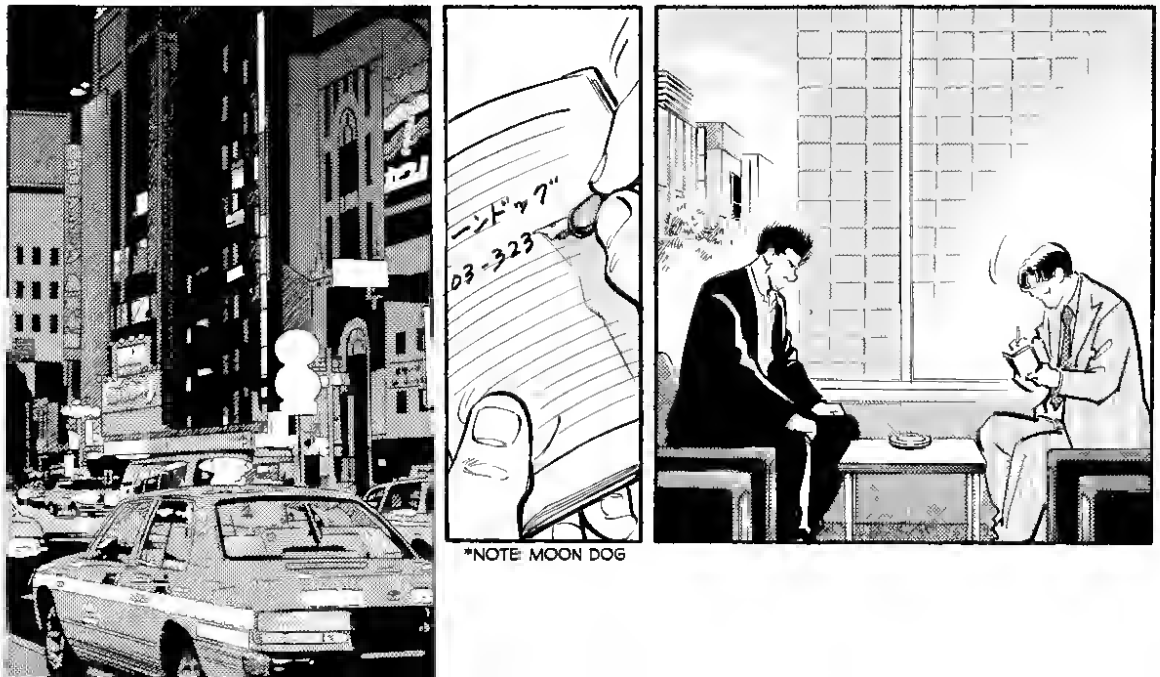
I UNDER-STAND.
...OR THEY COME TO THINK OF THEIR FAVORITE WRITER AS SOME KIND OF "GOD."
THEY BECOME CONVINCED THAT AN AUTHOR USED THEM AS THE MODEL FOR THEIR MAIN CHARACTER...
THEY IMAGINE THINGS...

...
...
...
IF YOU HAVE A FAN LETTER, I'LL FORWARD IT TO HER.
YOU DON'T COME ACROSS AS A VERY DANGEROUS PERSON, BUT MISS KUSAMA HAS A REPUTATION FOR HER STRICT GUARDEDNESS.
IT'S MISTER GOTO, RIGHT?
PLEASE, JUST ASK HER ONCE.
TELL HER THAT *SHINICHI GOTO,* ONE OF HER STUDENTS FROM ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, CAME LOOKING FOR HER CONTACT INFORMATION...
SORRY.
I APOLO-GIZE.

AND TELL HER I READ *BEAST OF THE APOCALYPSE,* AND IT MADE AN IMPRESSION...
STUDENT ...?!
SEVERAL YEARS BACK, SHE WON A MYSTERY NOVEL CONTEST, HER DEBUT. WE ONLY KNOW ABOUT THAT POINT ON...
EVEN ***WE*** DON'T KNOW ANY OF THE DETAILS ABOUT MISS KUSAMA'S PAST.
BUT... WHAT HAPPENS IF SHE REFUSES?
ALL RIGHT. I'LL GIVE MISS KUSAMA A CALL AND SEE WHAT HAPPENS.
HUH... SO SHE WAS A TEACHER ...

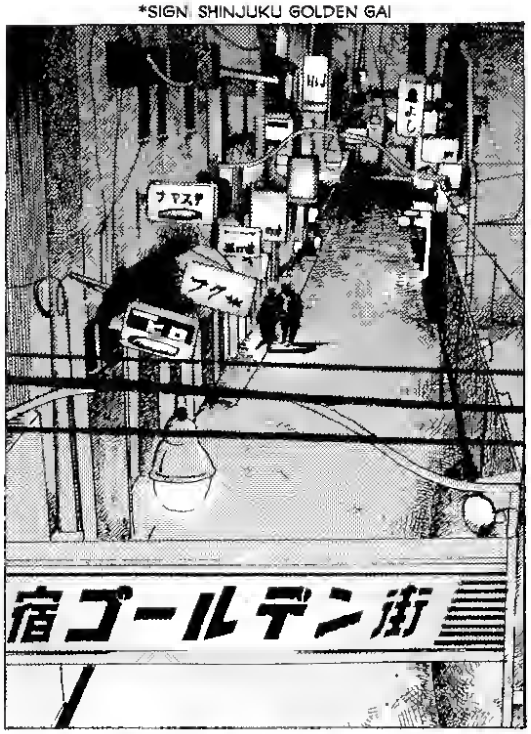
I'LL FORGET ABOUT IT.

...BUT SHE TOLD ME I SHOULD TAKE DOWN YOUR CONTACT NUMBER FOR THE TIME BEING...
IT'S PROBABLY BEST IF YOU DON'T EXPECT TOO MUCH...
I TOLD HER.
AND ...?!

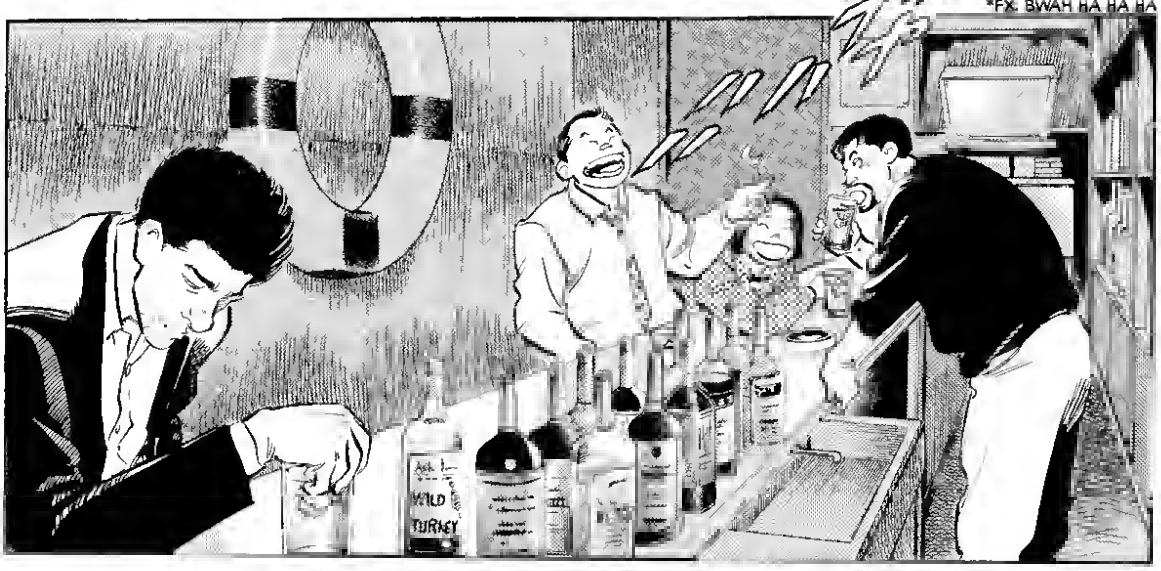


*NOTE: MOON DOG

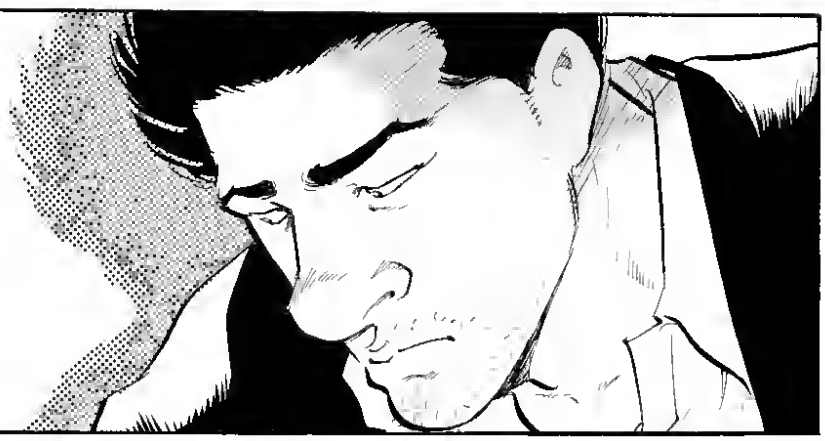
*SIGN: SHINJUKU GOLDEN GAI



*FX: BWAH HA HA HA

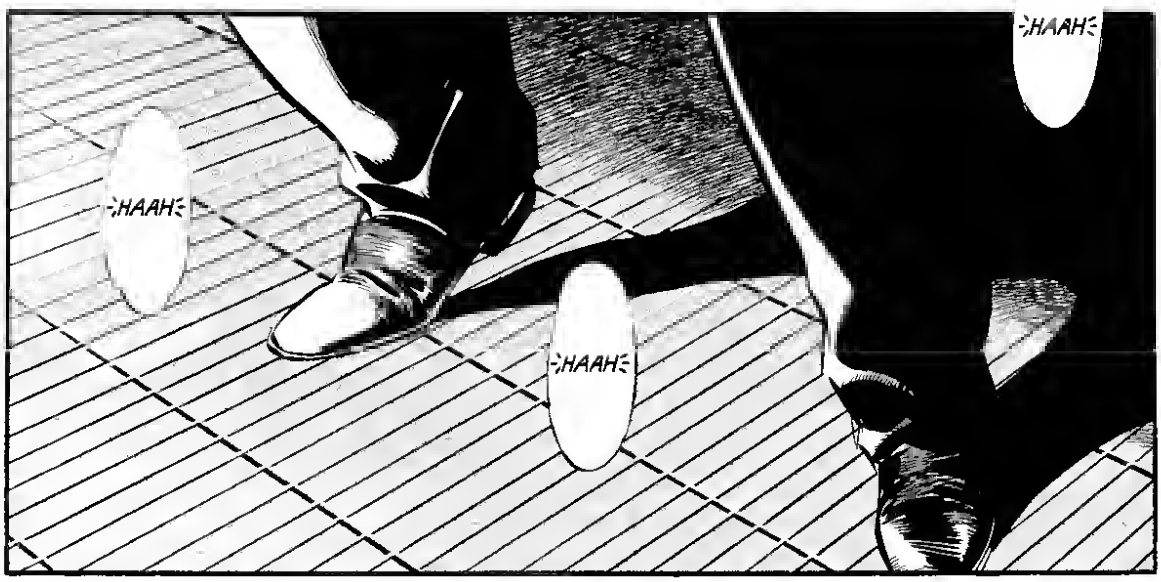


ANY HOPE OF CONTACT FROM YAYOI KUSAMA HAD VANISHED, WHEN A WEEK LATER, IN THE MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT...

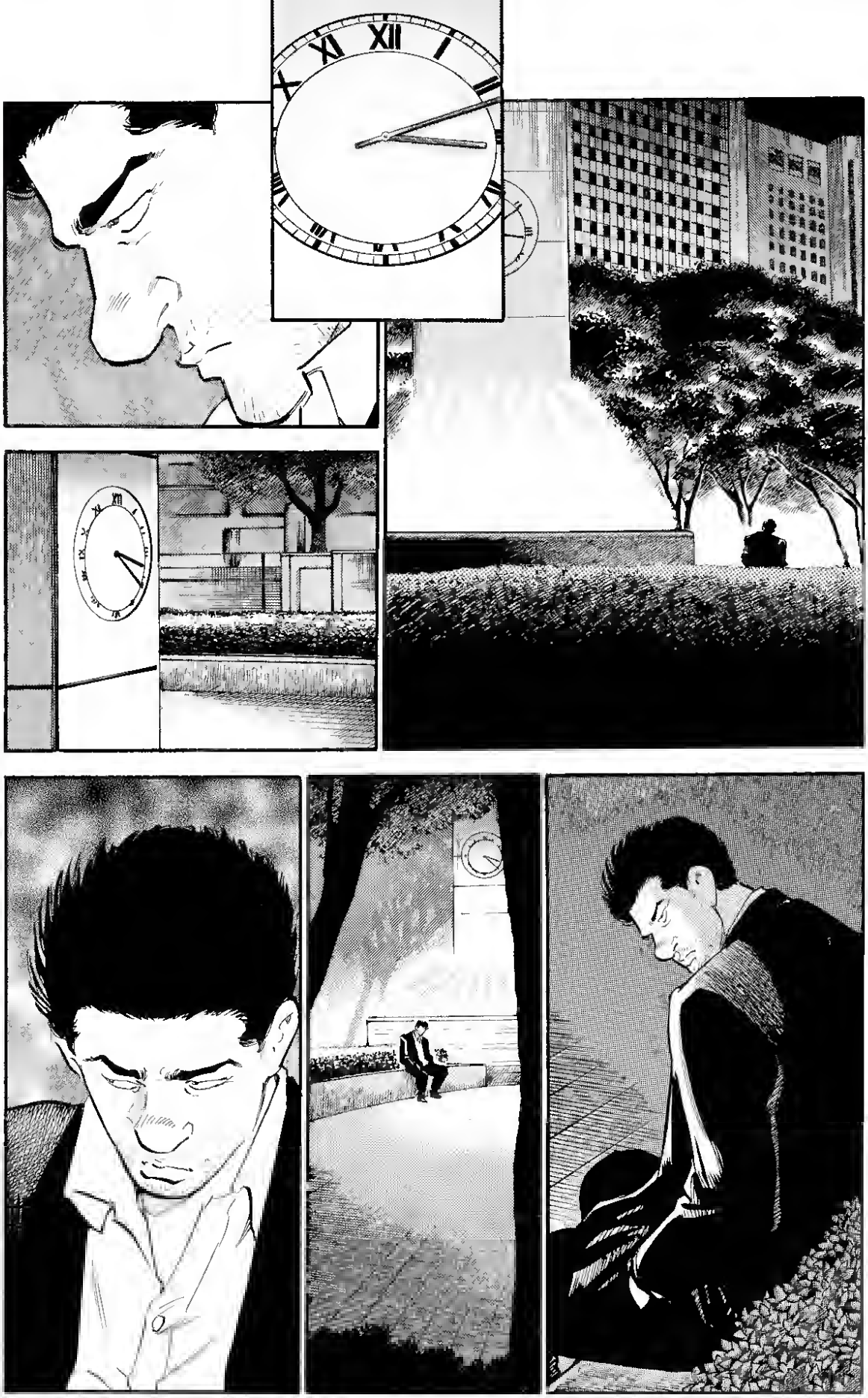


GUY NAMED *HIRADO* FROM SOME PUBLISHING COMPANY!
HEY, GOTO!
*FX: BRRR!!NNG
HELLO ...?
PHONE CALL FOR YA, *EH...?*

I GOT A FAX FROM MISS KUSAMA. AT THIS HOUR! CAN YOU BELIEVE IT?
AH! MISTER GOTO?
SHE SAYS IF THIRTY MINUTES GO BY AND SHE DOESN'T SHOW, YOU SHOULD JUST GIVE UP.
SHE SAYS TO WAIT AT THE FOUNTAIN IN THE SQUARE OF THE NR BUILDING BY SHINJUKU STATION'S WEST EXIT AT EXACTLY THREE O'CLOCK.


:HAAH:
:HAAH:
:HAAH:

*FX: HAAH HAAH
*FX: HMFF



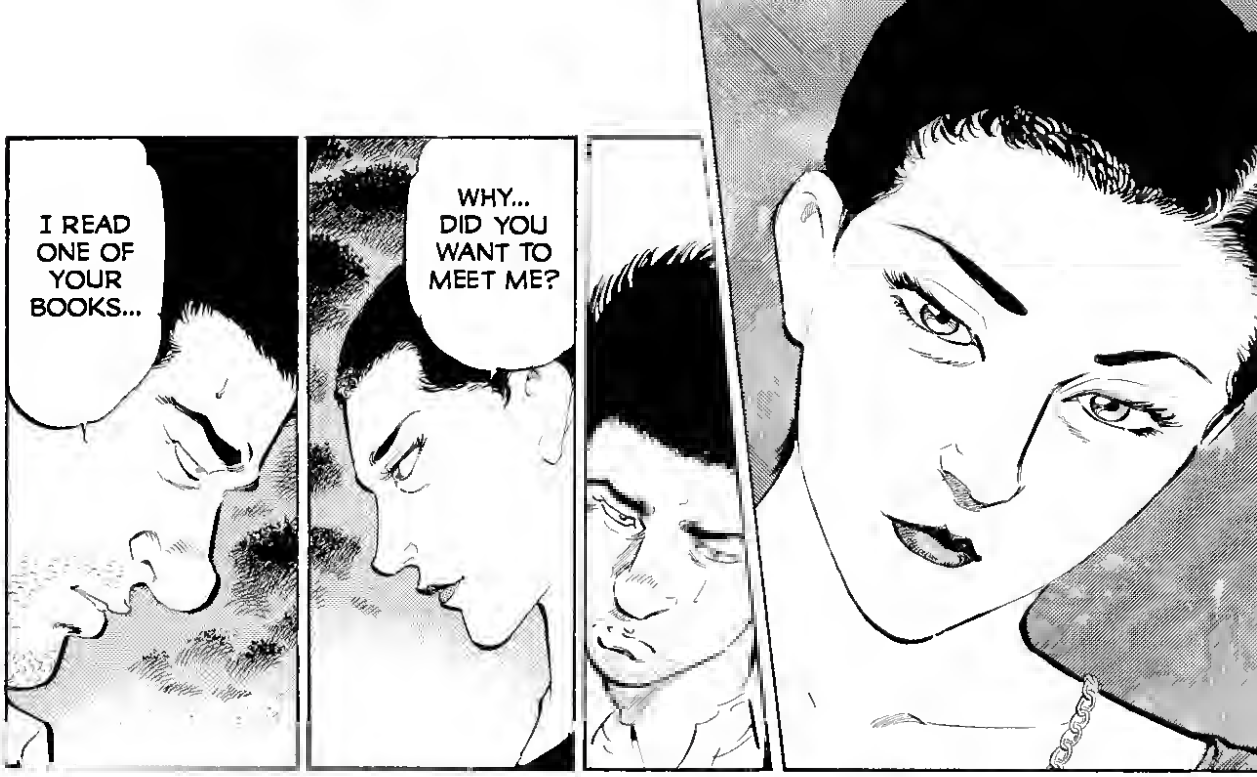
*FX: TAK TAK
XII
*FX: TAK TAK
*FX: TAK TAK

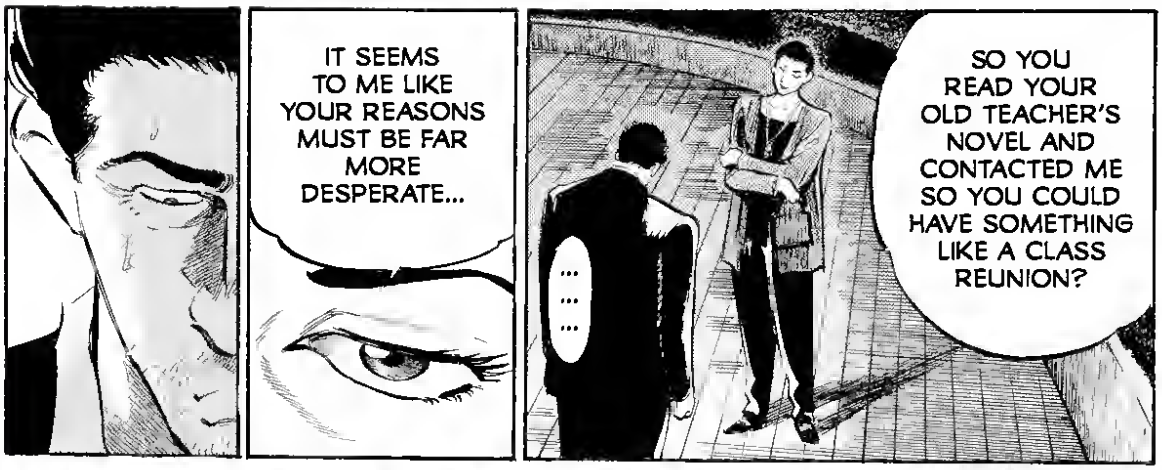
GOTO...

I'VE BEEN WATCHING YOU.
SORRY FOR MAKING YOU WAIT.
MRS... KURATA!!
*FX: WHOOOSH
...DID I LOOK TO YOU?
SO, HOW...
IF YOU HAD LOOKED LIKE YOUR AVERAGE GOOD-NATURED GUY, WELL-ADJUSTED TO THIS SOCIETY, I WOULD HAVE JUST GONE HOME WITHOUT A WORD...
HEH...

FEMALE TEACHER: END

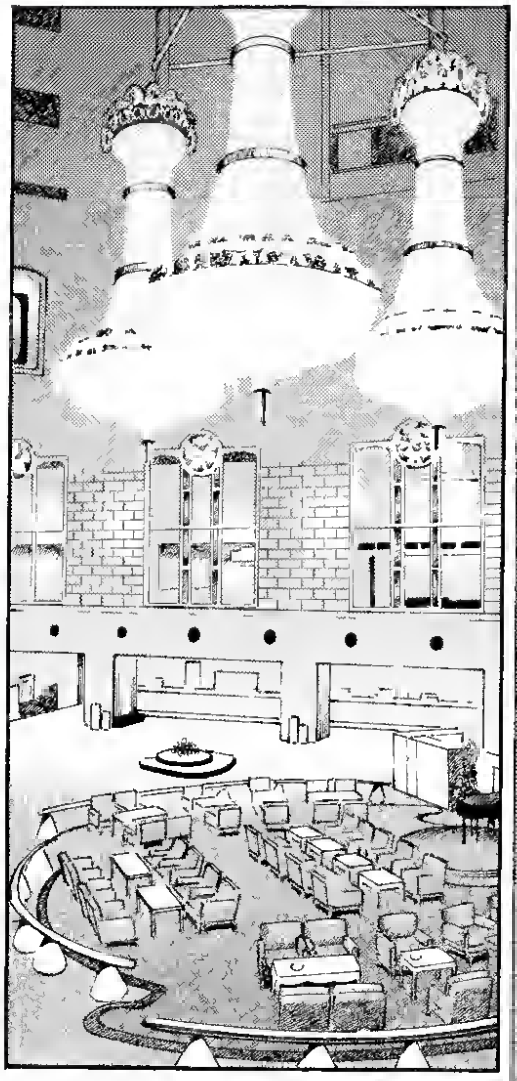
第43話●草間やよい
CHAPTER 43
YAYOI KUSAMA

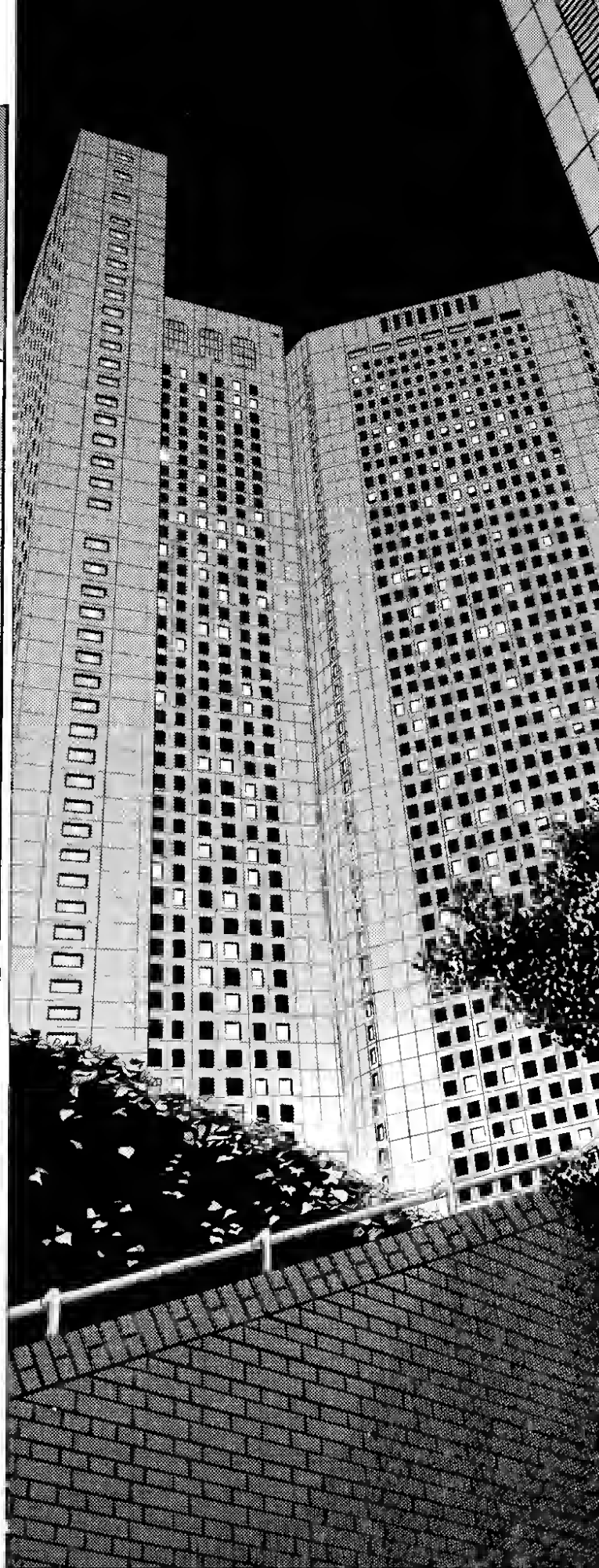

I READ ONE OF YOUR BOOKS...
WHY... DID YOU WANT TO MEET ME?


IT SEEMS TO ME LIKE YOUR REASONS MUST BE FAR MORE DESPERATE...
...
...
...
SO YOU READ YOUR OLD TEACHER'S NOVEL AND CONTACTED ME SO YOU COULD HAVE SOMETHING LIKE A CLASS REUNION?

YOU HAVEN'T BEEN FOLLOWED, HAVE YOU?

*FX: VRRMM
WHY DID YOU ASK IF I WAS FOLLOWED ...?!
MAYBE... I HAVE THE NOSE OF SOMEONE WHO'S LIVED AMONG MON-STERS.
I'M NOT THE PRETTY LITTLE LADY TEACHER YOU KNEW BACK THEN.
LET'S TAKE OUR TIME. TELL ME EVERYTHING.



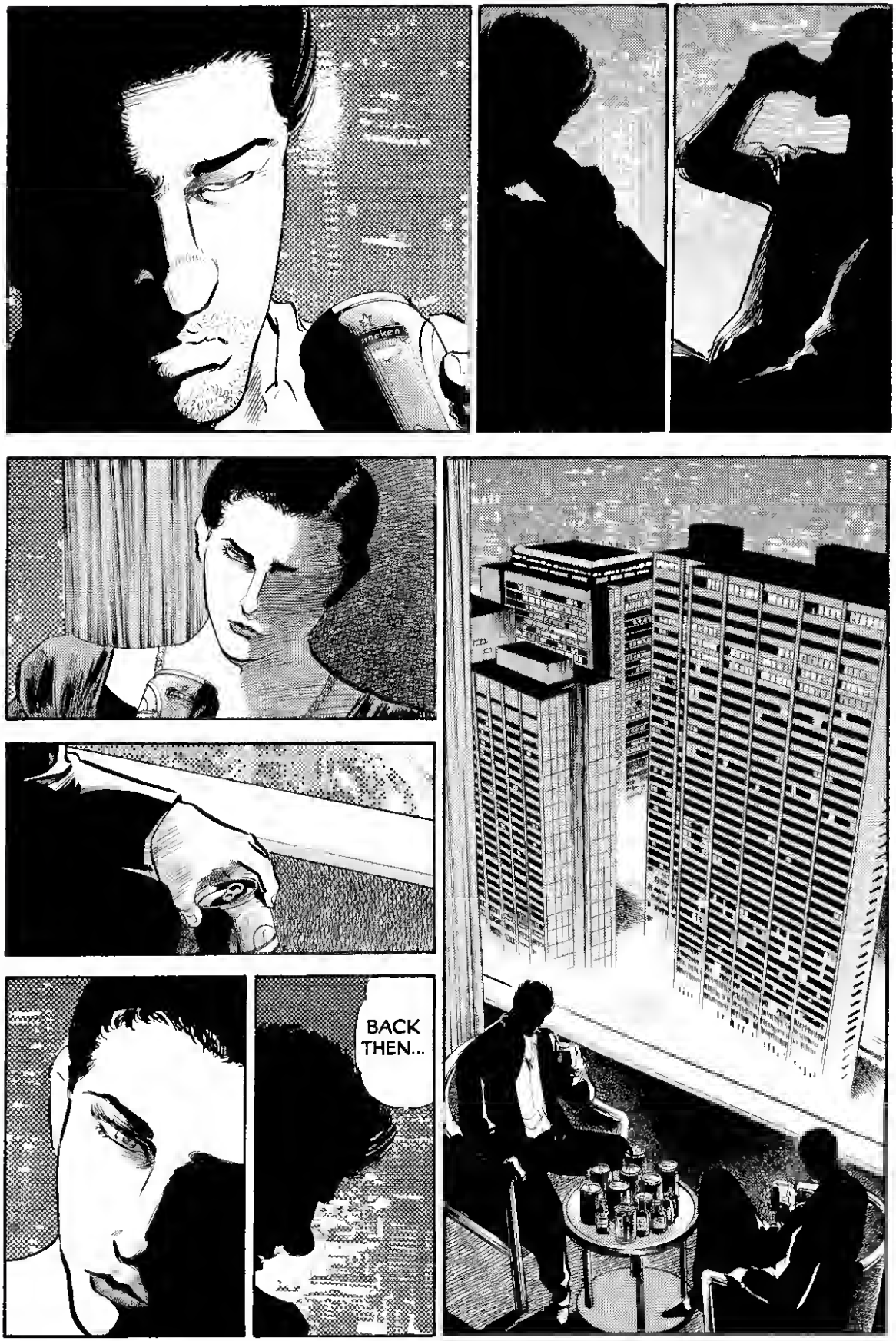


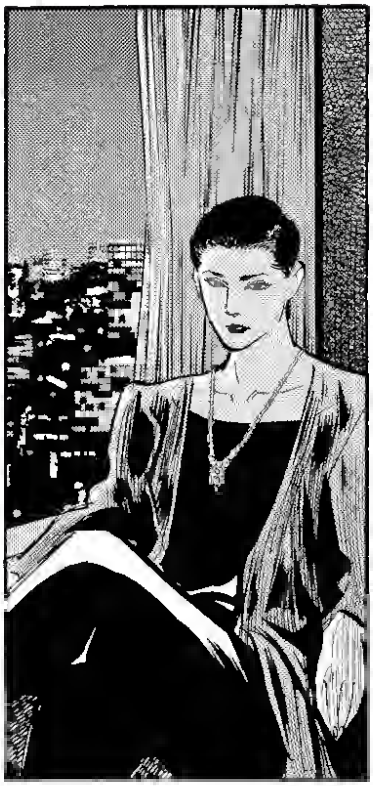
WHAT ARE YOU SO WORRIED ABOUT?
DO YOU THINK A MIDDLE-AGED WOMAN LIKE ME IS ACTING OUT OF SEXUAL DESIRE FOR YOU OR SOMETHING?

*SHKK
MM... WHAT A VIEW...

*FX: CLACK
*FX: CLACK
GET US SOME LIQUOR OUT OF THE FRIDGE.
BEEFEATER
TONIC
*FX: CHIK
TURN OFF THE LIGHTS...

NOW, THEN.
*FX: CRIK
*FX: CRIK


BACK THEN...



...WHEN YOU WERE THE TEACHER OF GRADE SIX CLASS B... DO YOU HAVE ANY MEMORY OF A CLASSMATE WHO MIGHT HAVE...
...HAD SOME... LIMITLESS HATE AGAINST ME?

IT'S NOT MY STYLE...
...TO WRITE ESSAYS, SELL MY FACE ON TV...
...AND DELICATELY EXPOSE FLASHES OF MY PRIVATE LIFE SO I CAN SELL MY BOOKS. I'M AN OUTLAW BY NATURE.

I KNEW IT...

I WRITE HARD-BOILED NOVELS THAT ONLY SELL THREE-THOUSAND UNITS ON THEIR FIRST PRINTINGS. NOBODY SHOULD KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT LADY AUTHOR YAYOI KUSAMA'S REAL BACKGROUND.

JUST WHO TOLD YOU ABOUT ME?
GOTO...
I WANT YOU TO TELL ME ALL ABOUT YOUR ORDEALS...

Here ye go
BELL'S
FINEST
WHISKY

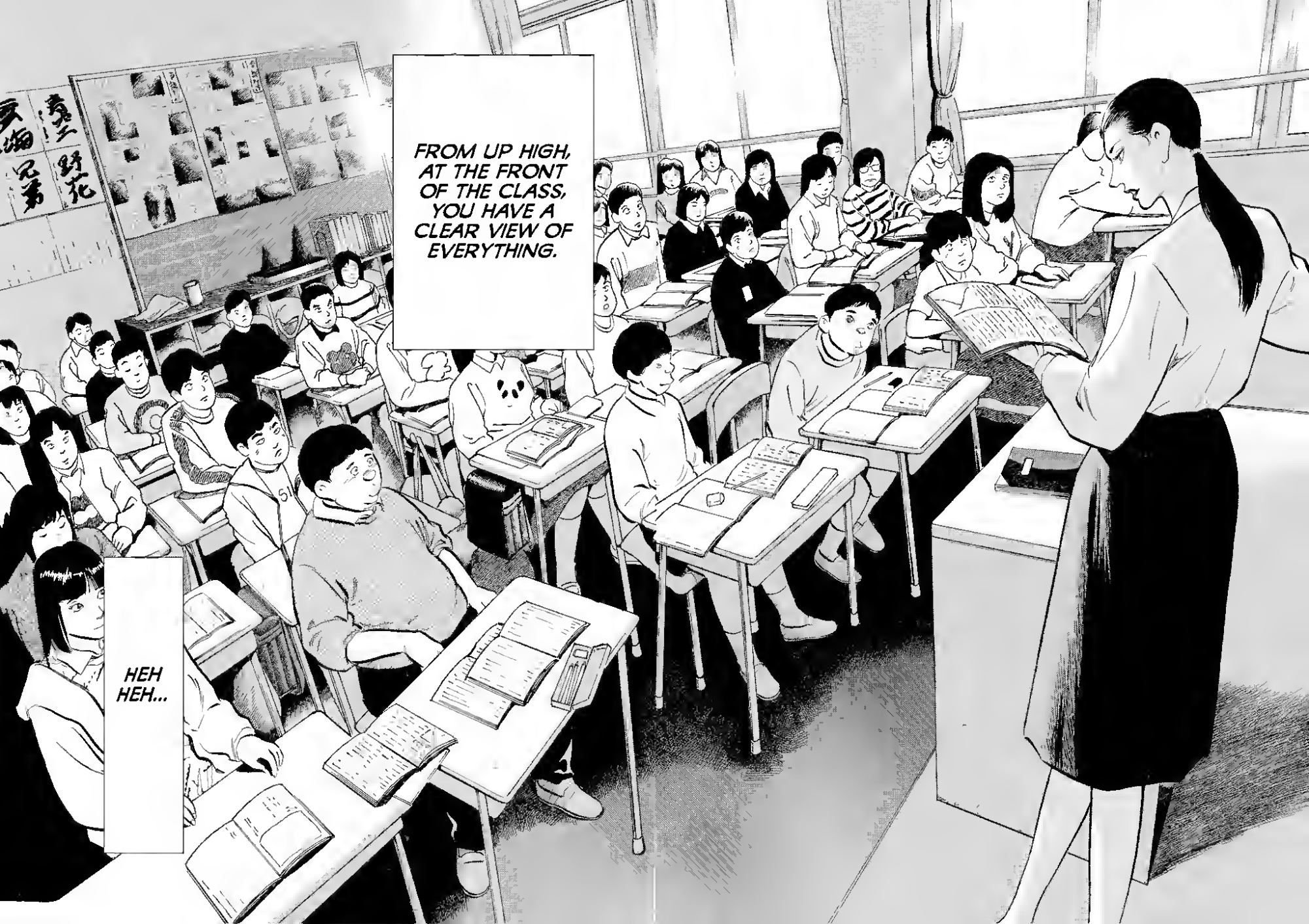
"ALIAS DOJIMA"...
YES...
YOU SAY YOU'RE CERTAIN THIS MAN WAS IN GRADE SIX, CLASS B?
LIKE LOTS OF KIDS ENTERING ADOLESCENCE, I WAS OVERLY SELF-CONSCIOUS, BUT I WAS BASICALLY A HAPPY, LAID-BACK TYPE...
THAT'S HOW I LOOK BACK ON IT.
CAN YOU THINK OF ANYTHING FROM WHEN YOU WERE A TEACHER... TWENTY-THREE YEARS AGO?

WHAT COULD MAKE A PERSON SO UTTERLY OBSESSED WITH SOMEONE LIKE THAT?
IT'S EXACTLY THAT KIND OF INCONGRUITY THAT AUTHORS LOVE WRITING ABOUT...
WHY...?!
THIS MAN... PROBABLY DESPISES *ME* AS WELL.
*FX CRIK

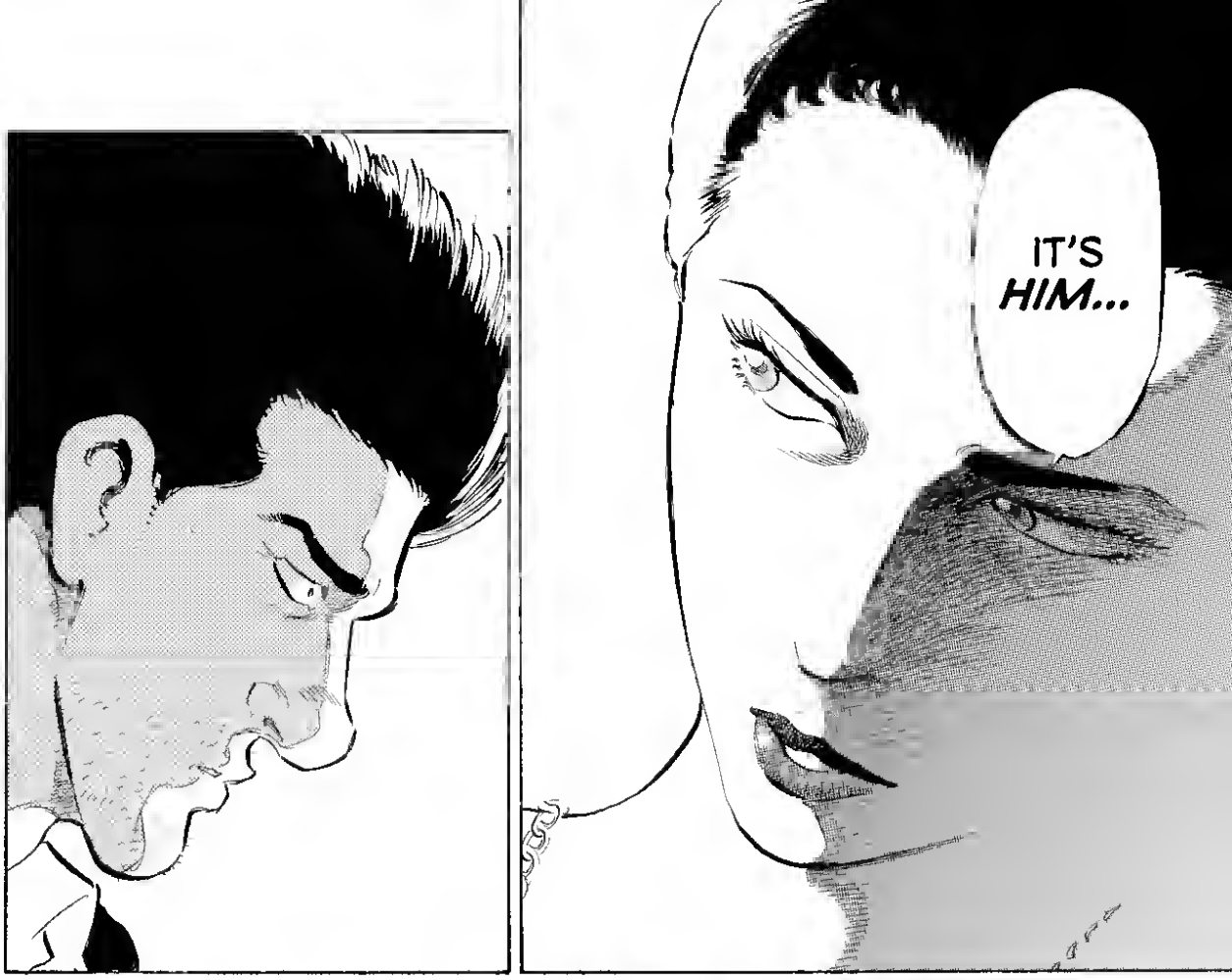
A MAN OF THAT KIND OF NEGATIVITY WOULD FORGIVE THOSE WHO TRIED TO SOMEHOW FIND SOME ESCAPE FROM THE SUFFOCATING COMMUNAL MENTALITY OF THIS COUNTRY... SELF-DESTRUCTIVE ARTISTS AND WRITERS... GANGSTERS AND MURDERERS...
...BUT I BELIEVE... HE FEARS *TRUE* "OUTSIDERS."

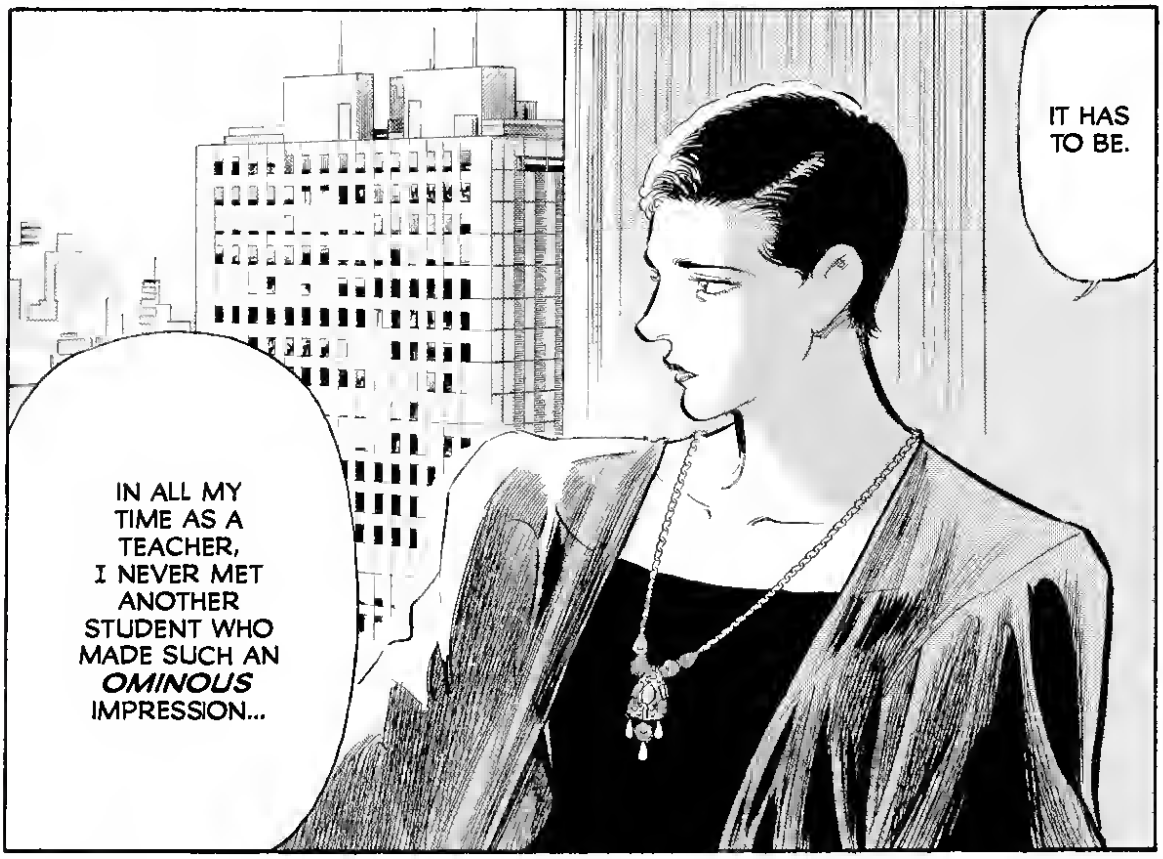
YAYOI KUSAMA: END

第44話●転校生A
CHAPTER 44
TRANSFER STUDENT A


FROM UP HIGH, AT THE FRONT OF THE CLASS, YOU HAVE A CLEAR VIEW OF EVERYTHING.
HEH HEH...

YOU KNOW WHICH BOYS ARE ALREADY STARTING TO FEEL SEXUAL DESIRE, EVEN IN GRADE SIX...
YOU KNOW WHAT EVERY STUDENT'S FAMILY IS LIKE...
YOU KNOW WHICH GIRLS LIKE WHICH BOYS...
DO YOU REMEMBER ALIAS DOJIMA...?!


IT'S *HIM...*


IT HAS TO BE.
IN ALL MY TIME AS A TEACHER, I NEVER MET ANOTHER STUDENT WHO MADE SUCH AN *OMINOUS* IMPRESSION...

WHAT WAS THIS STUDENT'S NAME...?
AND THEN YOU'LL WIN THIS GAME...
...ALIAS DOJIMA KILLS HIMSELF, AND IT'S ALL OVER, IS IT?
IF I TELL YOU HIS NAME, WILL IT SOLVE THE PUZZLE?

WHAT WILL YOUR LIFE BE AFTER...?
WILL THE CLOUDS CLEAR AWAY?
WILL YOU FEEL ECSTATIC?
GOTO, LISTEN TO ME.
TO THINK UP SOMETHING THAT *DARK...*
THIS IS THE KIND OF MAN WHO PAID THREE HUNDRED MILLION YEN TO HAVE YOU LOCKED IN A ROOM FOR TEN YEARS.

BUT IF *YOU* DIDN'T EXIST...
...HE WOULD BE ABLE TO REST EASY, WITHOUT ANY DOUBTS THAT HIS VIEW OF LIFE IS RIGHT--THAT THIS WORLD IS BUILT OUT OF NOTHING BUT EVIL DESIRES...
...HE'S PROBABLY HAD EVERY SUCCESS OF THE WORLDLY KIND... BEEN ABLE TO SATISFY ALL HIS DESIRES OF WEALTH, STATUS, PERVERSE SEXUAL INCLINATIONS. BUT AT THE END OF IT...
...HE WOULD BEGIN TO RECALL A LIFETIME'S WORTH OF *SHAME,* A LINGERING *SCAR* OF UNPLEASANT-NESS.

AND I THINK PERHAPS HIS AIM IS TO PUT *YOU* IN *HIS POSITION...* TO MAKE YOU LIVE IN HIS FATALISTIC *WORLD.*
YES.
HOW FATALISTIC.

YES.
ALIAS DOJIMA'S MESSENGER TOLD YOU THAT WE SHOULD THINK THIS THROUGH TOGETHER...?
DO YOU KNOW WHY I WANTED TO TALK *HERE?*
BECAUSE THERE PROBABLY WOULDN'T BE ANY BUGS SET UP IN A RANDOM ROOM IN SOME GIANT HOTEL.
SO WHAT DO WE DO NEXT...?

CAN WE MEET AGAIN... TONIGHT?
LIFE OF A WRITER, I GUESS.
SORRY. I HAVEN'T SLEPT IN ABOUT THREE DAYS.
*FX: YAWN
UNTIL WE FIGURE OUT EXACTLY WHAT THIS "CERTAIN INCIDENT" WAS THAT MADE HIM HATE YOU, HE'S SETTING THE PACE.
BUT... SOME-THING MORE ESSENTIAL AS WELL.
I'LL TELL YOU WHO ALIAS DOJIMA REALLY IS.
...
...
...
TONIGHT WE'LL TAKE OUR TIME, TRY TO REMEMBER...

SO SLEEPY ...
*FX: TOK

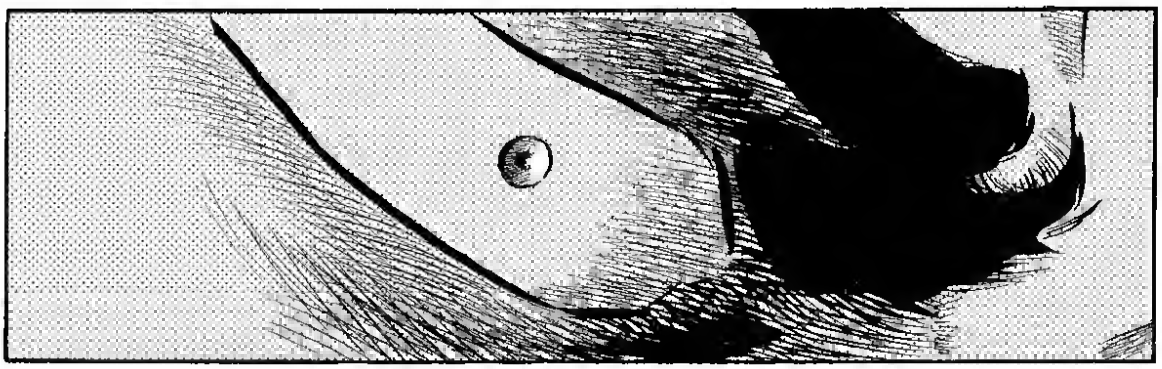
*FX: GZZZ

*FX: ZZZZ

20
19
18
17
16
5
*FX: NOK NOK
*FX: CHAK

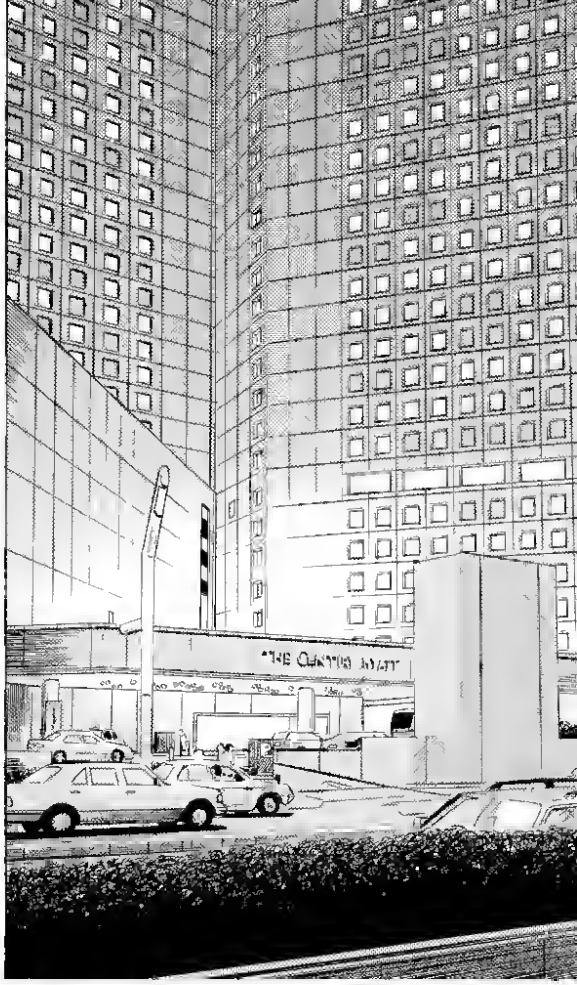
I SLEPT LIKE A BABY.
SPENT SOME TIME ON MY MAKEUP, TOO...

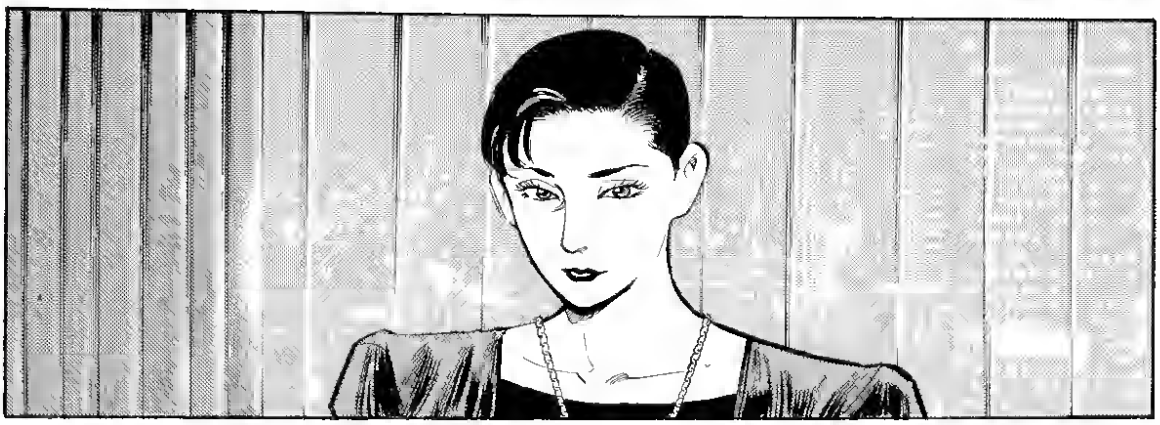
THE MAN WHO HATES ME...
...SO, PLEASE, LET'S JUST CUT TO THE CHASE.
I'M NOT GOOD AT SMALL TALK...
THE NAME OF THE STUDENT IN GRADE SIX, CLASS B THAT YOU HAD THAT OMINOUS SENSE ABOUT?
...AND THAT'S WHEN HE TRANSFERRED INTO GRADE SIX, CLASS B...
SUMMER VACATION HAD ENDED...



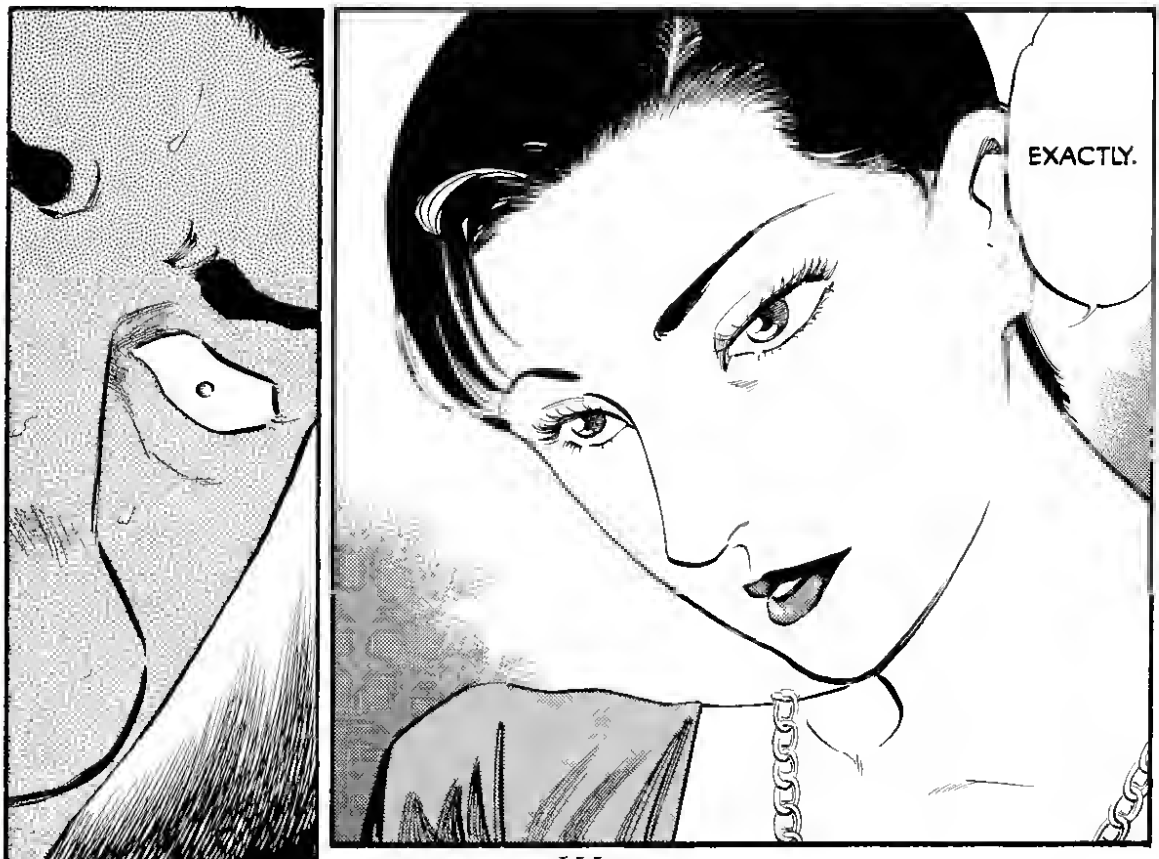
TRANSFER STUDENT A: END

第45話●深層海流
CHAPTER 45
DEEP CURRENTS





TAKAAKI KAKI-NUMA...


EXACTLY.

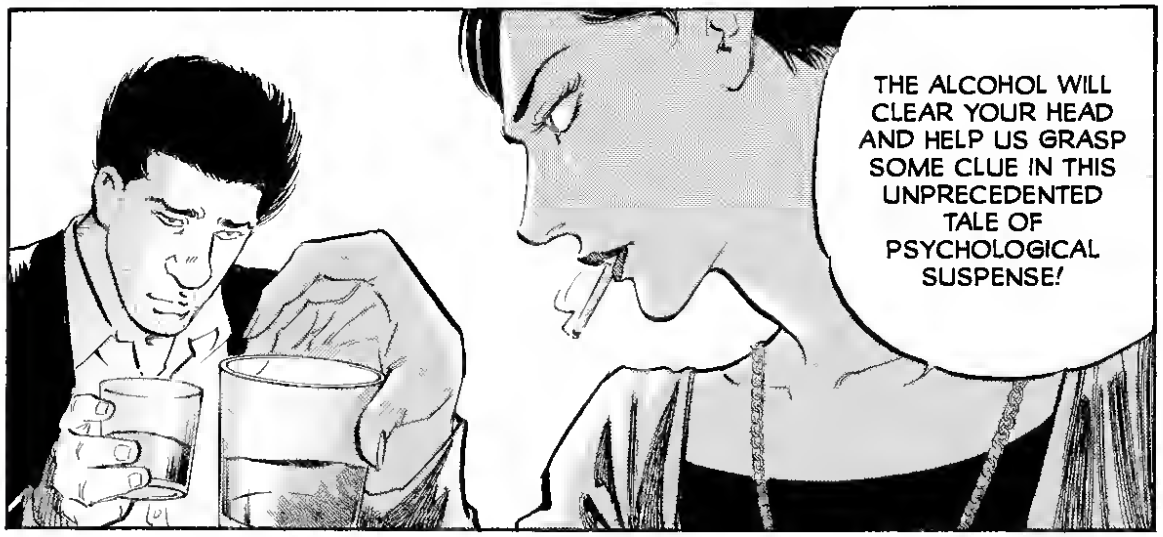
...THAT MIGHT HAVE INSPIRED KAKINUMA'S HATE?
DID SOME-THING HAPPEN ...
Budweiser
IS HUMAN RECALL, IS MEMORY, EVER THAT CERTAIN?
YOU'RE SURE YOU HAVEN'T JUST FORGOTTEN?
IT CAN HAPPEN AS TIME PASSES...
COULD HE *HATE* ME?! WE NEVER EXCHANGED A WORD!

MAYBE WHAT YOU DID WAS TOTALLY IGNORE HIM, BLOCK HIM RIGHT OUT MALICIOUSLY?
WELL, NOW YOU'VE GOT ME DOUBTING...
...
...
...
THE REASON I SENT YOU HOME YESTERDAY WAS BECAUSE I WANTED TO THINK ABOUT THINGS BY MYSELF AWHILE...
HEH! I GUESS NOT. YOU WEREN'T THAT KIND OF KID, WERE YOU...?
THAT'S NOT POSSI-BLE...

I'M ONE HUNDRED PERCENT CONFIDENT THAT ALIAS DOJIMA IS TAKAAKI KAKINUMA...
...BUT IN THE END, I COULDN'T THINK OF A REASON WHY HE WOULD HATE YOU.
I WENT THROUGH MY MEMORIES OF THAT TIME... THAT HALF A YEAR, FROM WHEN HE TRANSFERRED FOR THE NEW FALL TERM UNTIL MARCH OF THE FOLLOWING YEAR.

*FX: HRRK

*FX: PLUP PLIP PLIP PLIP

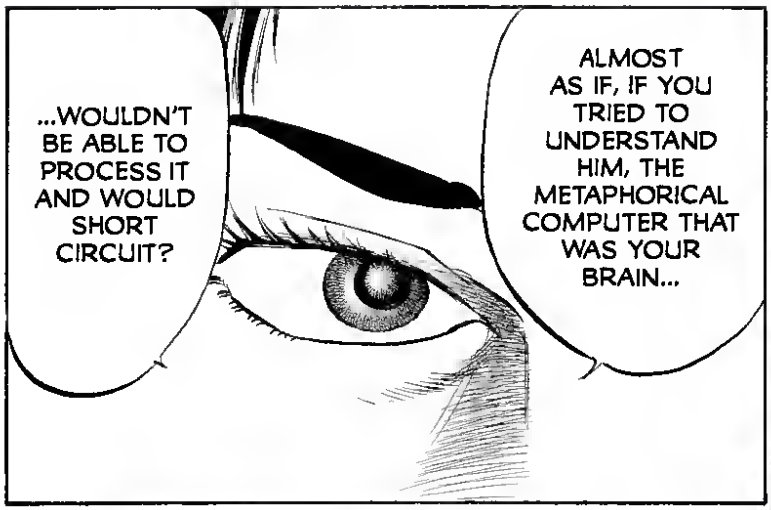


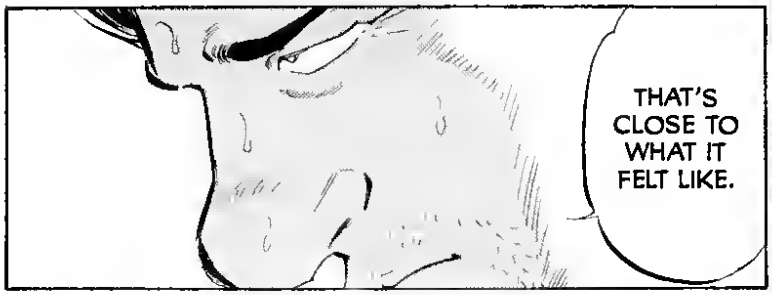
AFTER YOU GRADUATED FROM THAT ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, YOU WENT TO A LOCAL PUBLIC JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL.
HE WENT TO A PRESTIGIOUS PRIVATE JUNIOR HIGH THAT WAS KNOWN FOR ITS STUDENTS LATER GETTING INTO TOKYO UNIVERSITY ...
ﾌﾌｯ
NEVER.
YOU WERE NEVER IN TOUCH WITH HIM?
AFTER THAT, I HAD NO KNOWLEDGE OF WHAT HAPPENED TO ANY OF YOU.
THAT NEXT YEAR, I GOT DIVORCED AND WENT THROUGH SOME OTHER PROBLEMS AND LEFT TEACHING.
NOT ONCE...
YOU DIDN'T HEAR ANY RUMORS OR EVEN SEE HIM IN THE STREET?

TRY TO REMEMBER, NOW...
IN CLASS OR AFTER SCHOOL... ON FIELD TRIPS...
THEN, WHAT WAS YOUR IMPRESSION OF HIM THAT HALF YEAR YOU WERE CLASSMATES?
...
...
...
THERE WAS THIS SENSE THAT EVERYONE WAS AVOIDING KAKINUMA, BUT...
YES. HE HAD TOP-CLASS GRADES AS A STUDENT, BUT THERE WAS A FEELING OF EMPTINESS AROUND HIM...
HE WAS LIKE A MIDDLE-AGED INVESTOR WHO DOESN'T SHOW AN INTEREST IN ANYTHING OTHER THAN FLUCTUATIONS IN STOCK PRICES.

BACK THEN...I USED TO AVOID *THINKING* ABOUT KAKINUMA AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE.
I REMEMBER SOMETHING...
WHAT...?!

I FEEL ALMOST LIKE, AS A KID, THE POWER TO MY THOUGHT CIRCUITS SWITCHED THEMSELVES OFF WHEN THEY WERE CONFRONTED WITH THAT MYSTERIOUSNESS OF HIS...
TELL ME MORE...
... BECAUSE I *HATED* HIM OR ANYTHING ...
IT DEFINITELY WASN'T...


ALMOST AS IF, IF YOU TRIED TO UNDERSTAND HIM, THE METAPHORICAL COMPUTER THAT WAS YOUR BRAIN...
...WOULDN'T BE ABLE TO PROCESS IT AND WOULD SHORT CIRCUIT?


THAT'S CLOSE TO WHAT IT FELT LIKE.

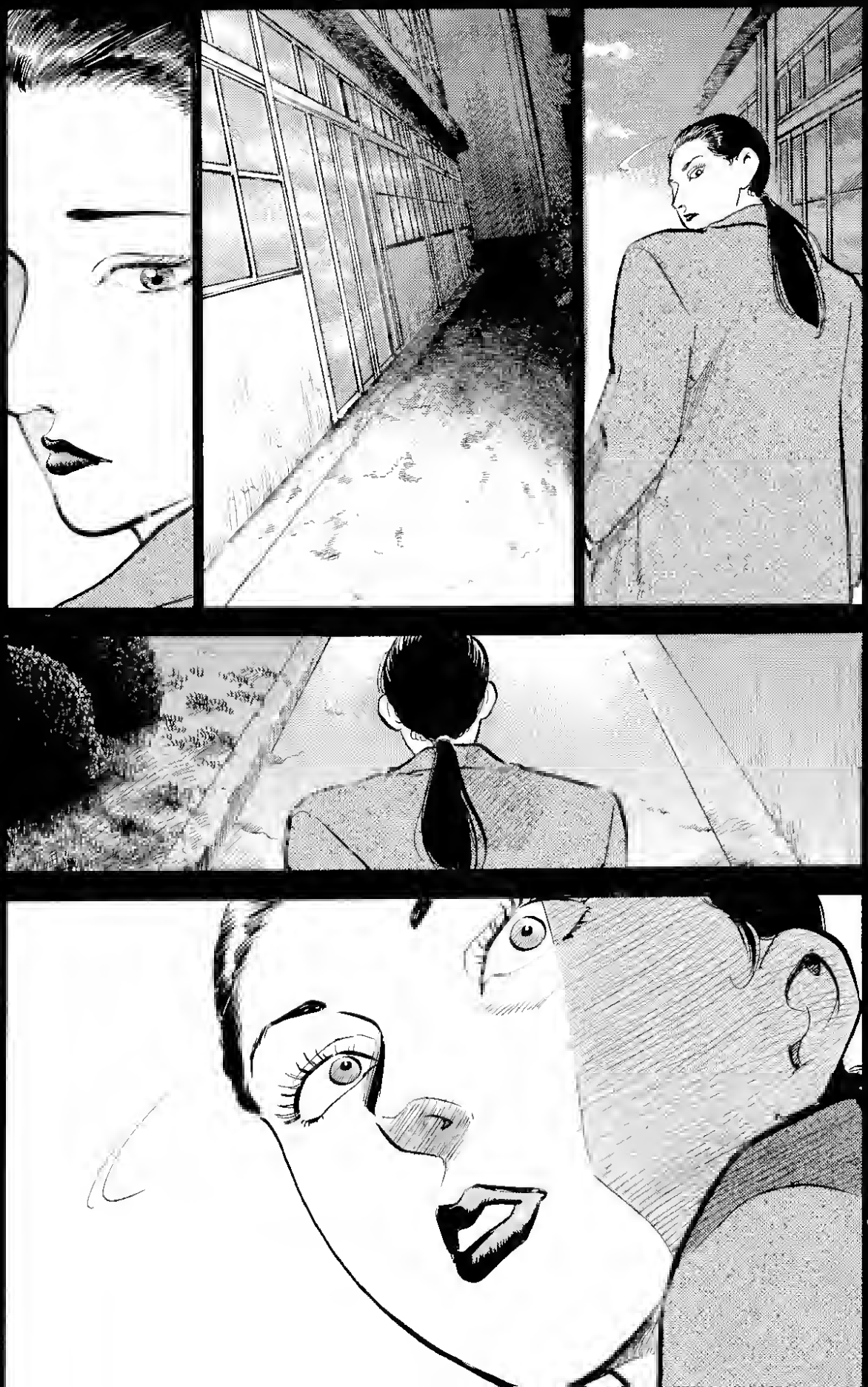
SOMEHOW, I THINK I'VE FIGURED IT OUT...

THE OTHER STUDENTS JUST HAD SOME INDISTINCT AVERSION TO HIS DARKNESS, SO THEY AVOIDED HIM...
YOU WERE THE ONLY ONE WHO WAS HELD BY TAKAAKI KAKINUMA'S *PRESENCE.*

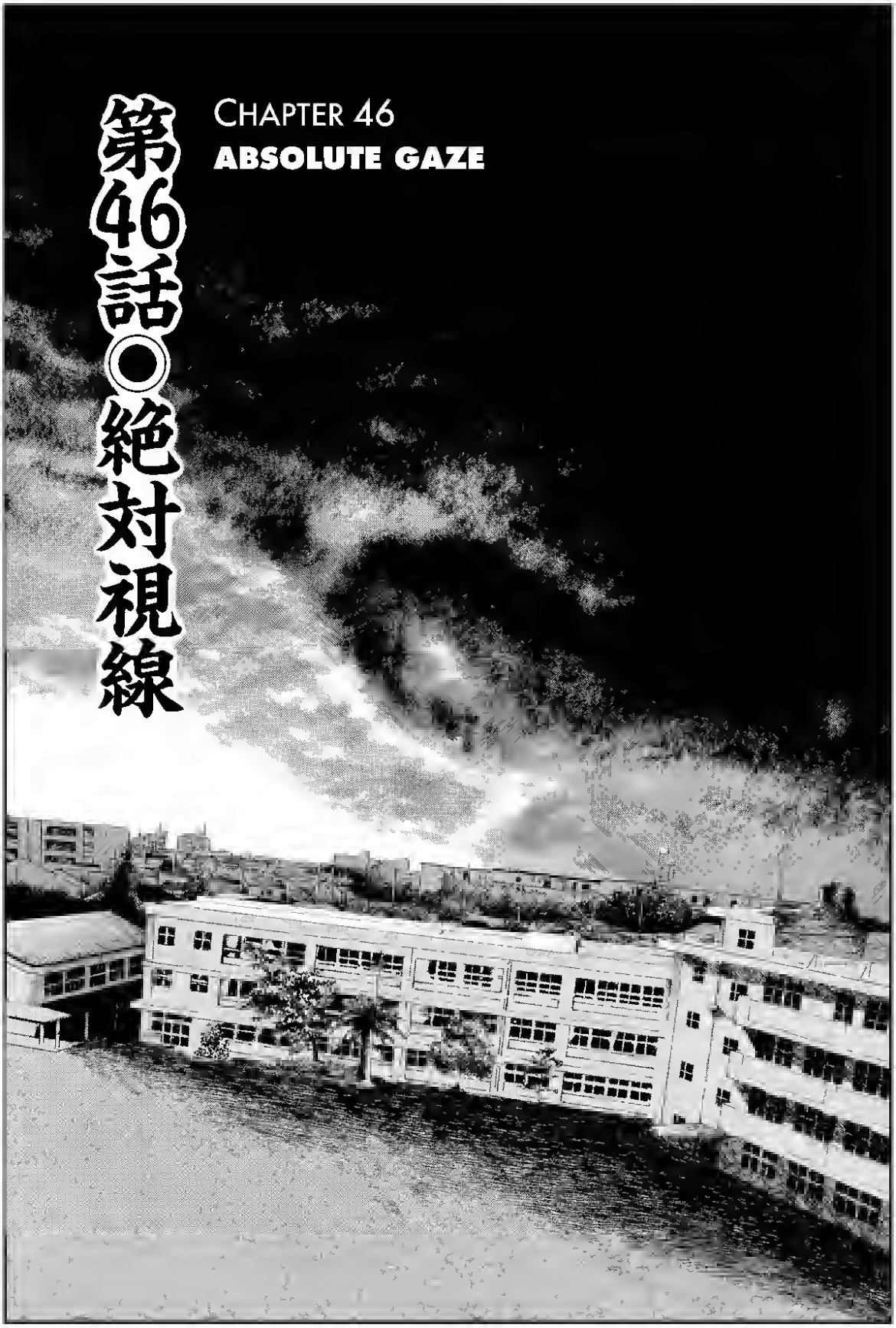
UNTIL THIS MOMENT TONIGHT, YOU'VE HAD HIM LOCKED UP *SO DEEP* IN YOUR SUBCONSCIOUS THAT YOU COULDN'T EVEN REMEMBER HIM.

LISTEN. DO YOU WANT TO HEAR SOME-THING?
ABOUT A "CERTAIN INCIDENT" I'VE NEVER TOLD ANYONE ELSE ABOUT BEFORE...?

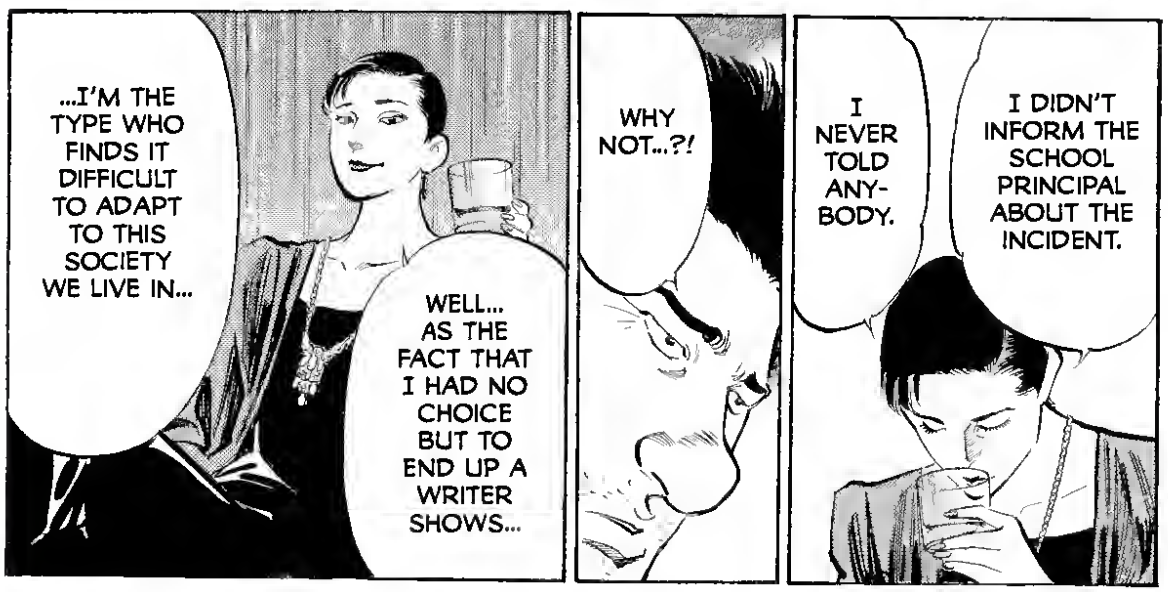
"IT WAS A DAY IN DECEMBER, WHEN I WAS TEACHING YOU KIDS IN GRADE SIX, CLASS B..."



DEEP CURRENTS: END


第46話◎絶対視線
CHAPTER 46
ABSOLUTE GAZE

WAS HE TRYING TO KILL ME?! OR WAS IT JUST A WARNING?!
THE CONCRETE BLOCK LANDED IN A NEARBY FLOWER BED...


...I'M THE TYPE WHO FINDS IT DIFFICULT TO ADAPT TO THIS SOCIETY WE LIVE IN...
WELL... AS THE FACT THAT I HAD NO CHOICE BUT TO END UP A WRITER SHOWS...
WHY NOT...?!
I NEVER TOLD ANY-BODY.
I DIDN'T INFORM THE SCHOOL PRINCIPAL ABOUT THE INCIDENT.

SAW THAT THAT WAS MY DISPOSITION, MY NATURE.
MAYBE HE SAW RIGHT THROUGH ME...

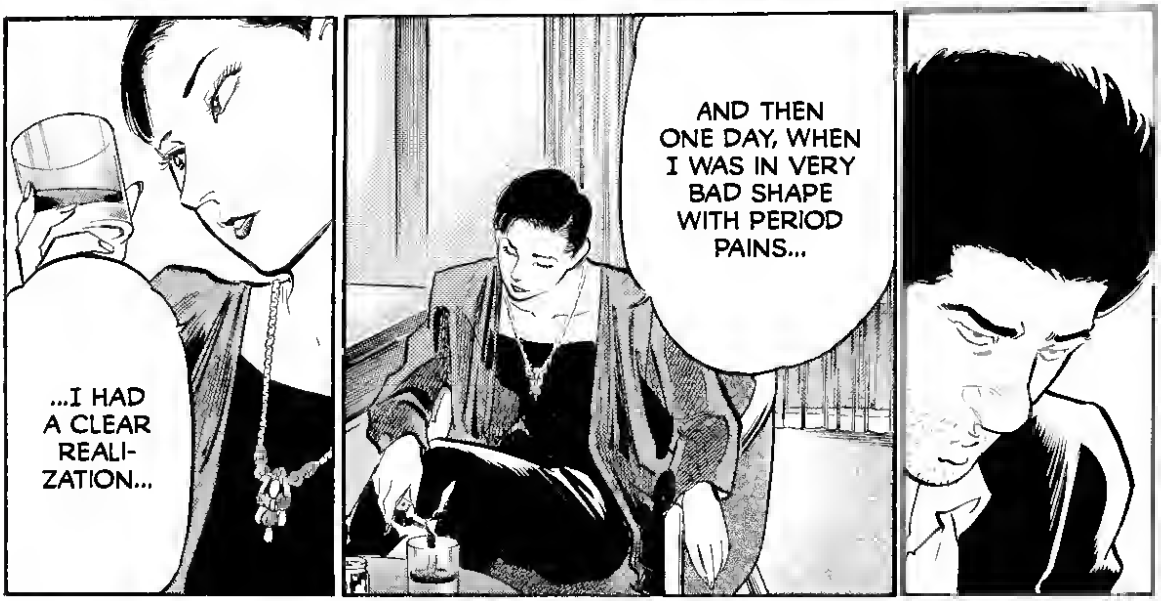
*HRRK
GOTO...
IT WAS SOMETHING DEEPER THAN THE RELATIONSHIP TEACHERS USUALLY HAVE WITH THEIR PROBLEM STUDENTS...
...
...
...
I TOO WAS STRONGLY GRIPPED BY HIM... BY TAKAAKI KAKINUMA.
I HAVE A CON-FESSION.
BACK THEN... I WAS ENDURING A HOME LIFE WHERE MY HUSBAND AND I COULD BARELY STAND TO LOOK AT EACH OTHER ANYMORE...

...BUT IT WAS AS IF ONE STUDENT *KNEW* THAT...

"...HE WAS SEEING RIGHT THROUGH ME AND SAYING, 'THE REASON YOU TEACH SO ENTHUSIASTICALLY IS BECAUSE YOU'RE TRYING TO PUSH YOURSELF AWAY FROM THE REALITY OF YOUR BARREN MARRIAGE.'"
"THAT GAZE... IT WAS AS IF..."

THAT'S ALMOST EXACTLY WHAT CAME INTO MY HEAD.
TH-THEN WHAT?

HOW COULD AN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL STUDENT KNOW ABOUT SUCH THINGS...? I WORRIED, BUT WHAT WAS THE USE?
I FIGURED IT WAS ALL IN MY MIND. THAT I WAS BEING PARANOID, OR MAYBE IT WAS NERVES.


...I HAD A CLEAR REALI-ZATION...
AND THEN ONE DAY, WHEN I WAS IN VERY BAD SHAPE WITH PERIOD PAINS...

...THAT THE BEST THING THAT COULD HAPPEN WOULD BE FOR THE KID TO DIE IN A CAR ACCIDENT OR SOME-THING.

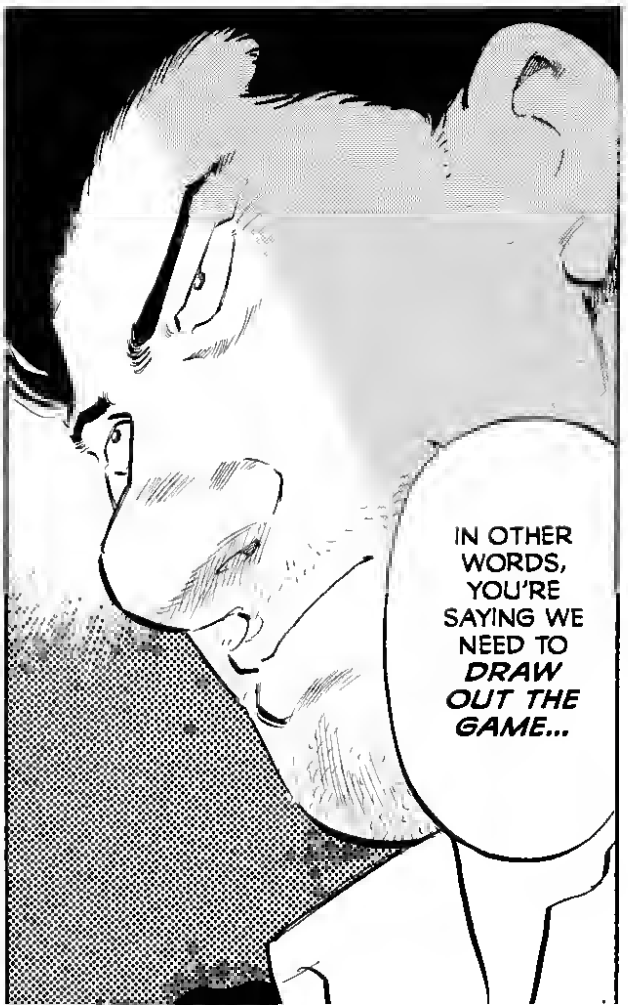
BUT I ONLY EVER THOUGHT THAT ONCE--NEVER AGAIN BEFORE OR AFTER!
I'M VERY STRAIGHT-FORWARD, I GUESS.
YOU PROTECTED YOURSELF AGAINST KAKINUMA BY TURNING OFF YOUR THOUGHT CIRCUITS... YOU DODGED THE PROBLEM...
AND THAT WAS THE DAY WITH THE CONCRETE BLOCK...?
YES.
THAT VERY EVENING, IN FACT.

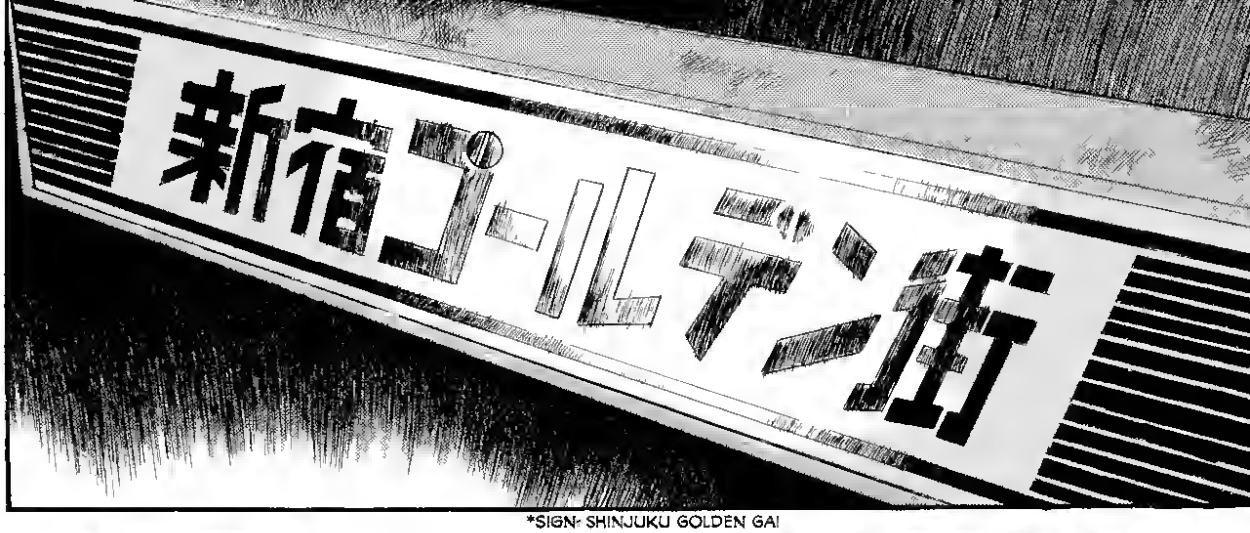
SOMETHING *MUST* HAVE HAPPENED...
NOW... NO MATTER WHAT IT TAKES, WE HAVE TO OPEN UP THAT BLACK BOX OF YOUR MEMORY... THE ONE THAT'S SEALED UP KAKINUMA FOR TWENTY-THREE YEARS.

I JUST REMEMBER FRAG-MENTED SCENES OF THOSE DAYS...
...AND SOME ALMOST ICONIC IMAGES OF KAKINUMA COME TO MIND...
...BUT WHY DOES HE HATE ME?! I CAN'T REMEMBER ANYTHING THAT MUCH...
THIS IS MY NUMBER WHEN I'M WORKING.
IF YOU REMEMBER ANYTHING, OR THE OTHER SIDE MAKES ANY MOVES...
...BE SURE TO CALL ME. USE A PUBLIC PHONE.
MAYBE IT'S TOO SOON?!
DO YOU NEED A LITTLE TIME?
UNDER-STOOD.
*FX RRP

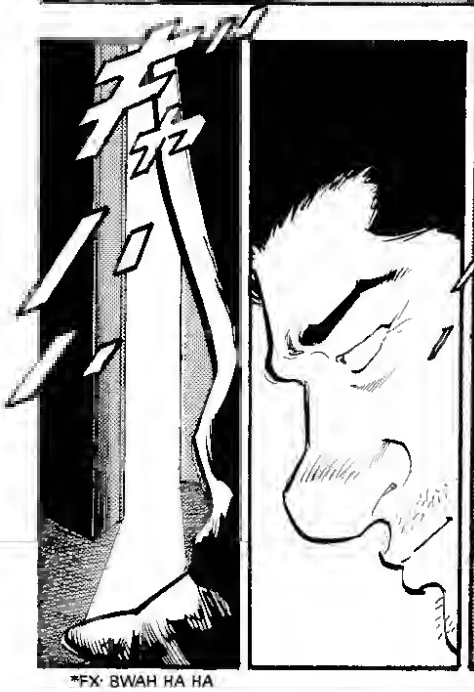
...AND NOW WE'VE COME TO THE CONCLUSION THAT ALIAS DOJIMA IS, IN FACT, KAKINUMA.
ALIAS DOJIMA'S MESSENGER... THIS MAN WHO CALLED HIMSELF AN "OBSERVER"... HE TOLD YOU TO COME TO ME FOR HELP...
GOTO...
I THINK IT'S A *TRAP...*
...
...
...
WHY WOULD HE SET THINGS UP SO WE COULD FIGURE OUT HIS TRUE IDENTITY SO EASILY...?
IT COULD BE A FEINT TO LURE YOU-- NO, *BOTH* OF US-- DEEPER INTO THE MAZE.

UNTIL WE GET THE FULL PICTURE OF THIS PSYCHOLOGICAL SUSPENSE THRILLER...UNTIL YOU REMEMBER HIS REASON FOR HATING YOU...WE SHOULD KEEP THE NAME "TAKAAKI KAKINUMA" A SECRET.

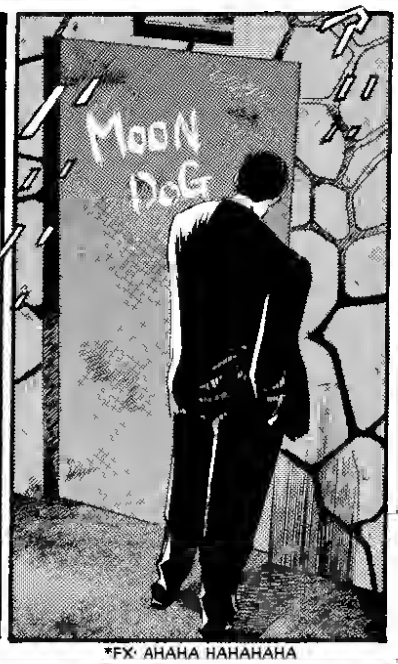

IN OTHER WORDS, YOU'RE SAYING WE NEED TO *DRAW OUT THE GAME...*



*SIGN- SHINJUKU GOLDEN GAI



*FX- BWAH HA HA



*FX- AHAHA HAHAHAHA

OUR CUSTOMERS HERE HAVE BEEN WAITING FOR YA!

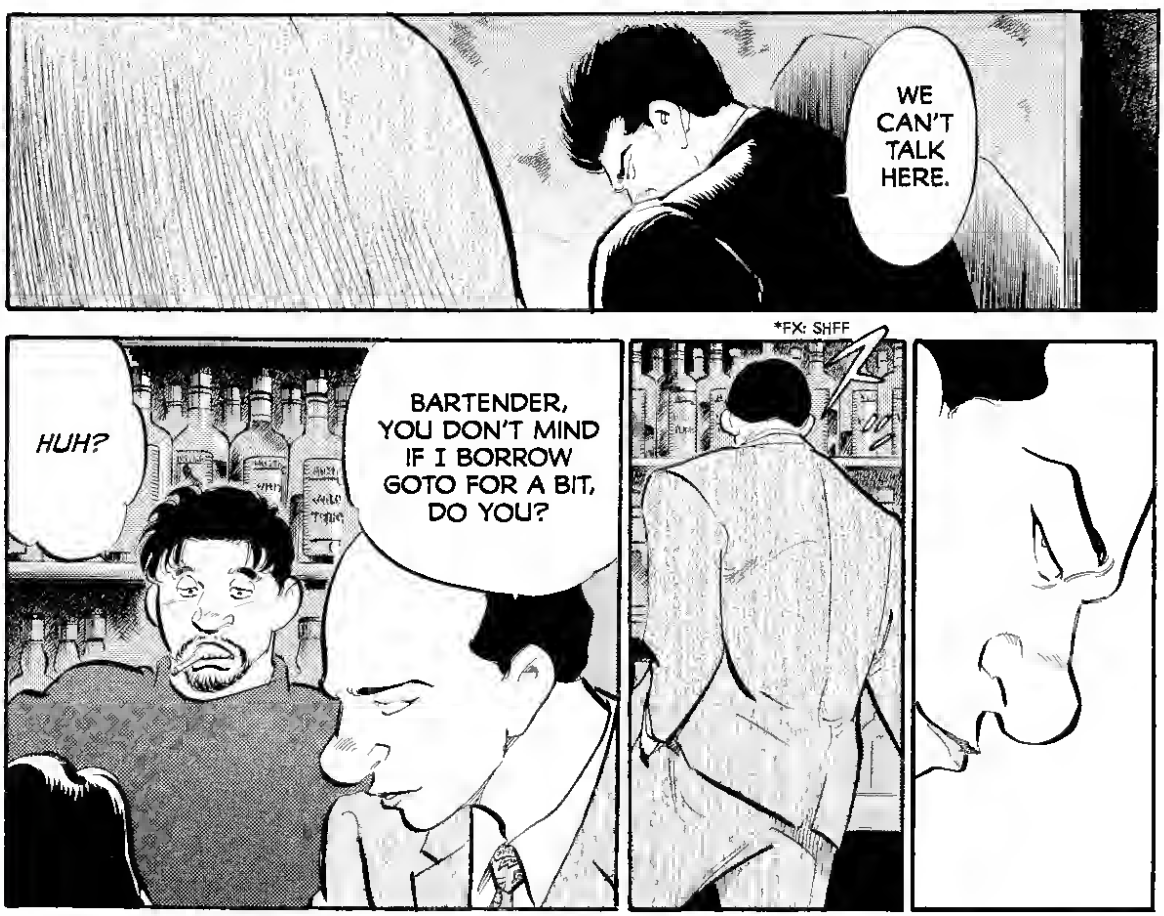
HEY, THERE!

ABSOLUTE GAZE: END

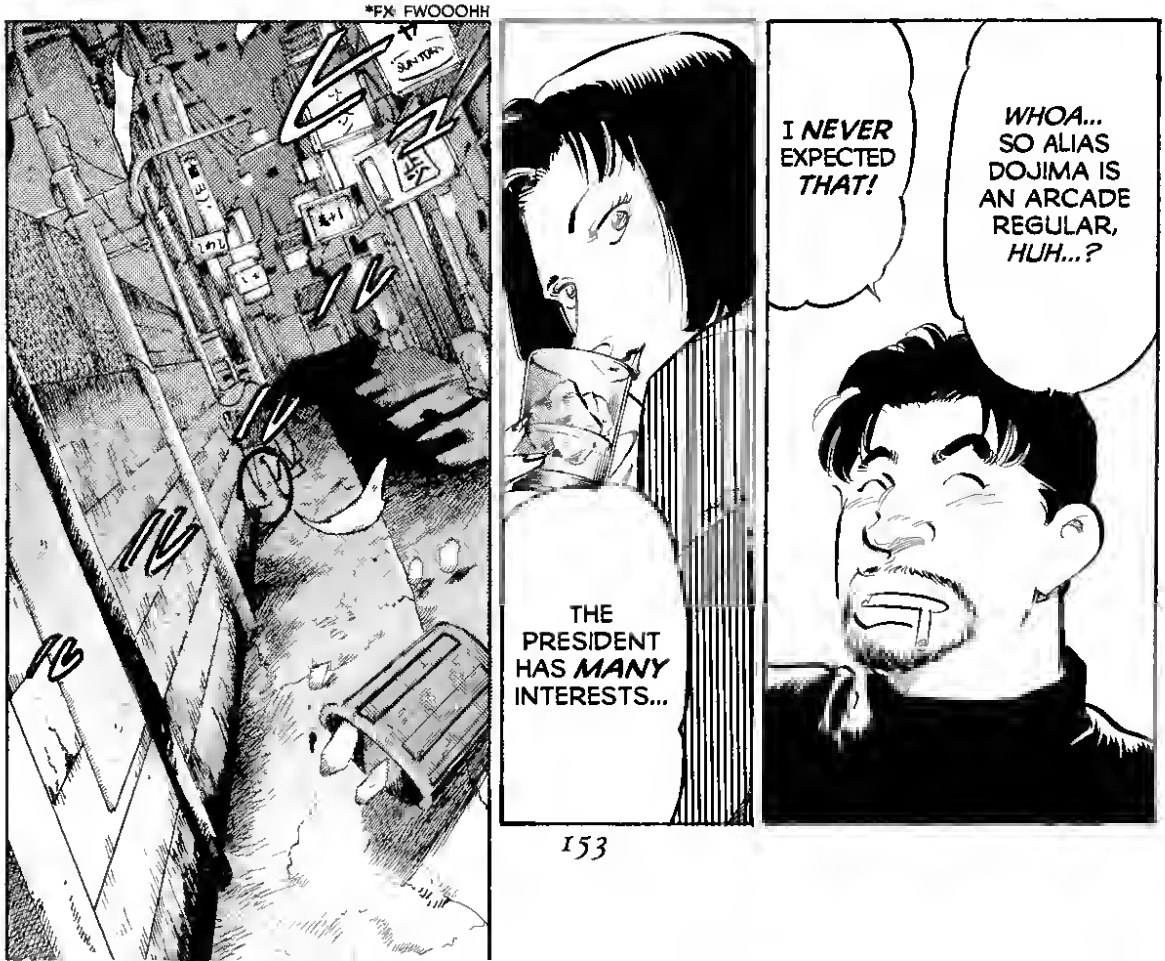
CHAPTER 47
DOUBT
第47話●疑　念

"I THINK IT'S A TRAP..."
"A FEINT TO LURE YOU DEEPER INTO THE MAZE..."
CALM DOWN ...
CALM THE HELL DOWN ...
MISTER GOTO...

*FX: BWAH HA HA
AAH! OH, THAT'S AWE-SOME!
SO HOW'S THE OLD TEACHER DOING?

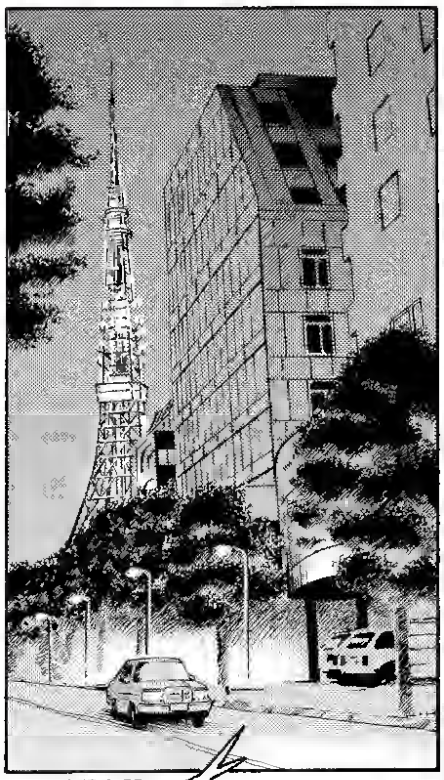

WE CAN'T TALK HERE.
*FX: SHFF
HUH?
BARTENDER, YOU DON'T MIND IF I BORROW GOTO FOR A BIT, DO YOU?

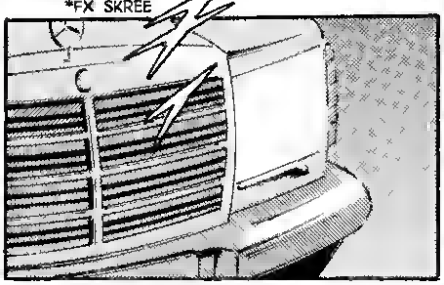
*FX: CREAK
GO AHEAD! GO AHEAD!
WE'RE GOING TO THE VIDEO ARCADE TO TRY OUT THE LATEST MACHINES. I WANT A DECISIVE MATCH AGAINST GOTO...
*FX: BAM


*FX: FWOOOHH
THE PRESIDENT HAS *MANY* INTERESTS...
I *NEVER* EXPECTED *THAT!*
WHOA... SO ALIAS DOJIMA IS AN ARCADE REGULAR, *HUH...?*

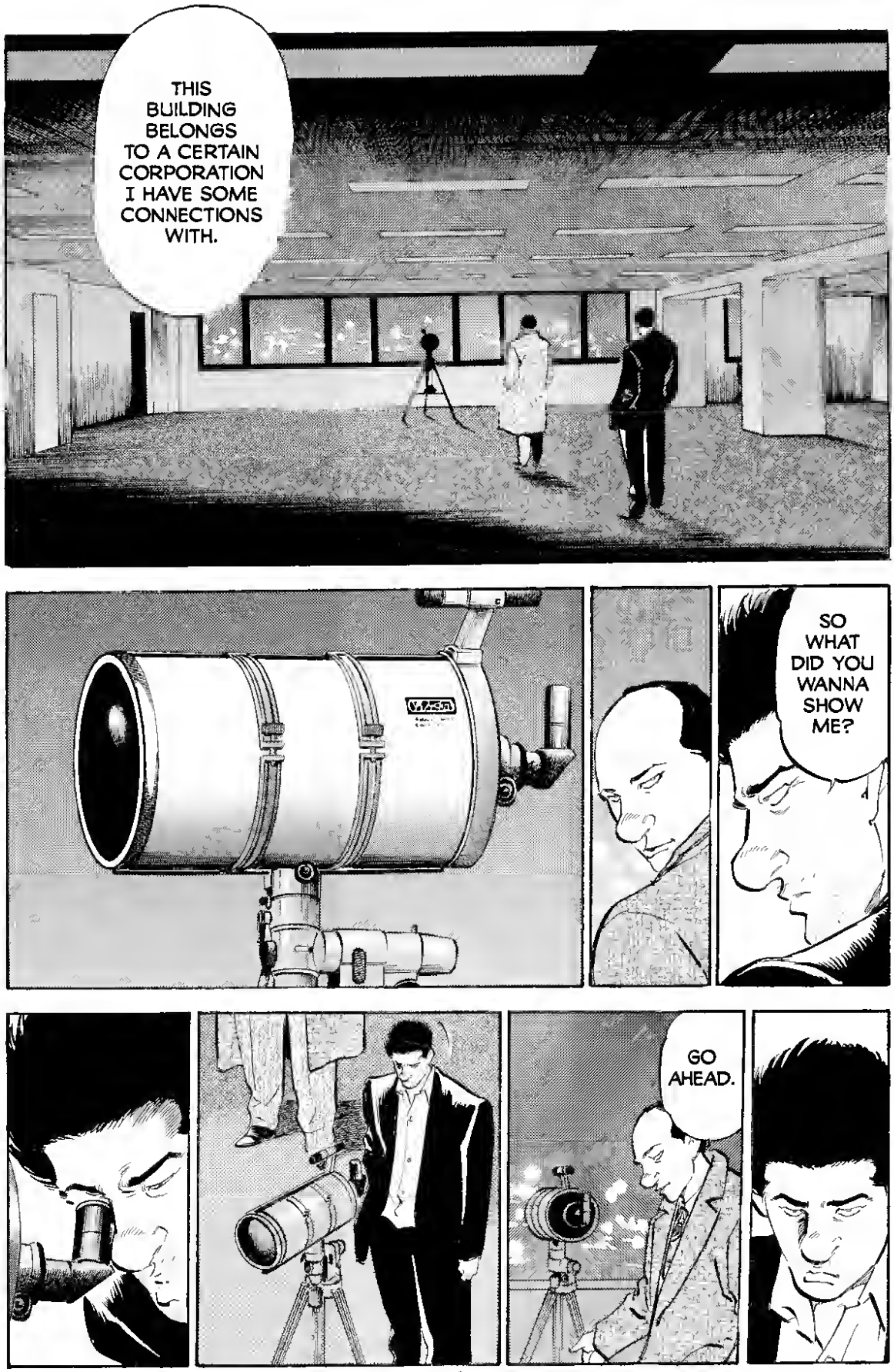
*FX FWOOOHH

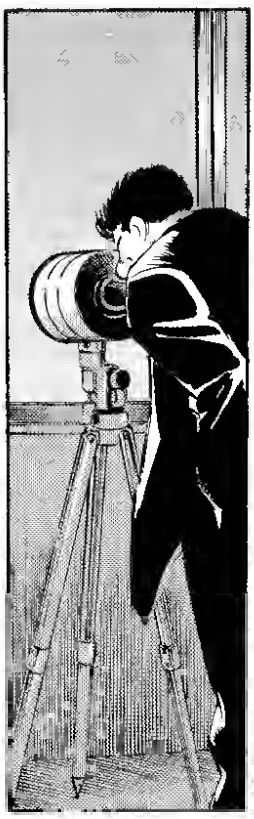
ALL RIGHT. GET IN.
*FX: BAM
*FX: BAM
EVE-NING.
THERE'S SOME-THING I WANT TO SHOW YOU...

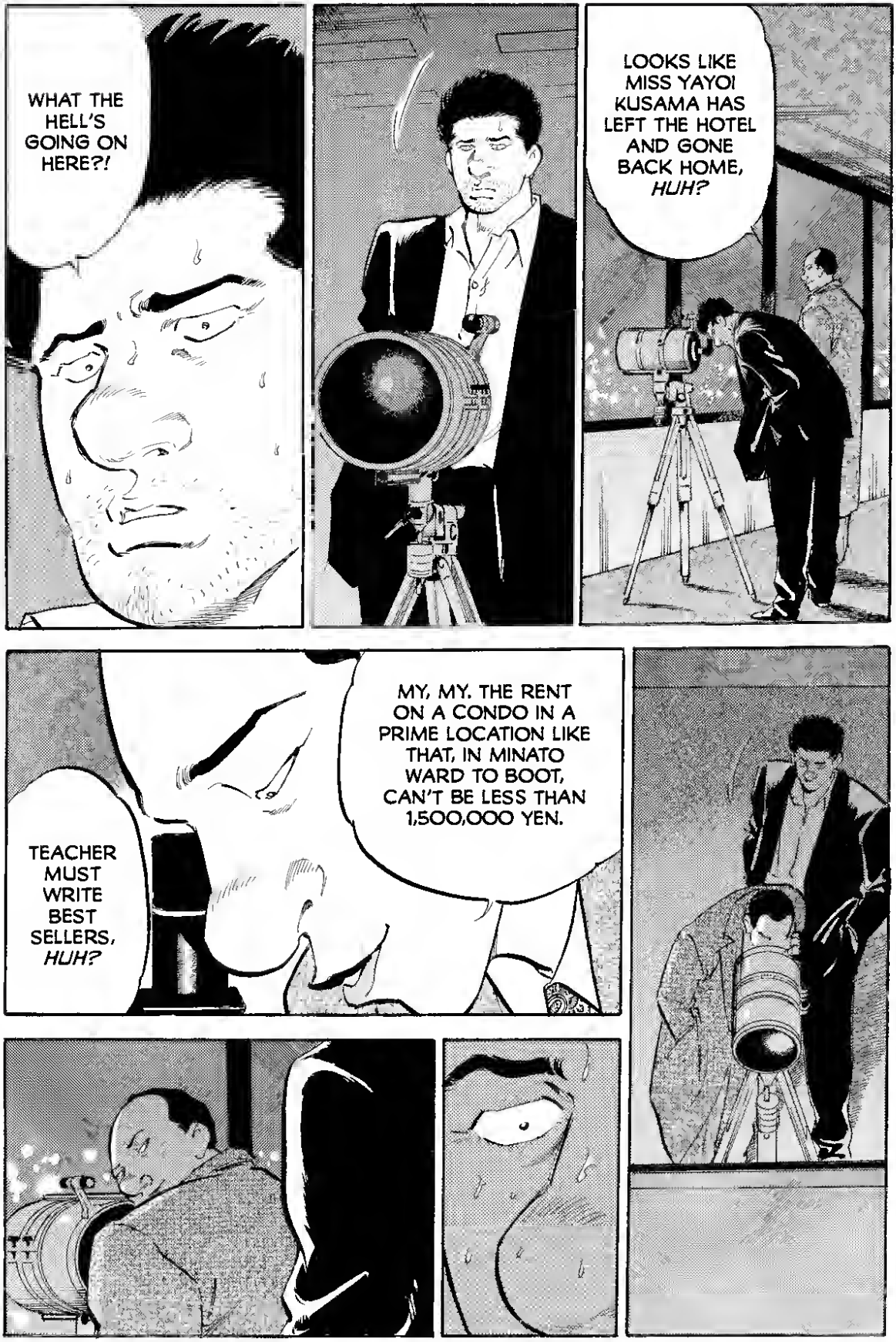



*FX SKREE

*FX: CHIK

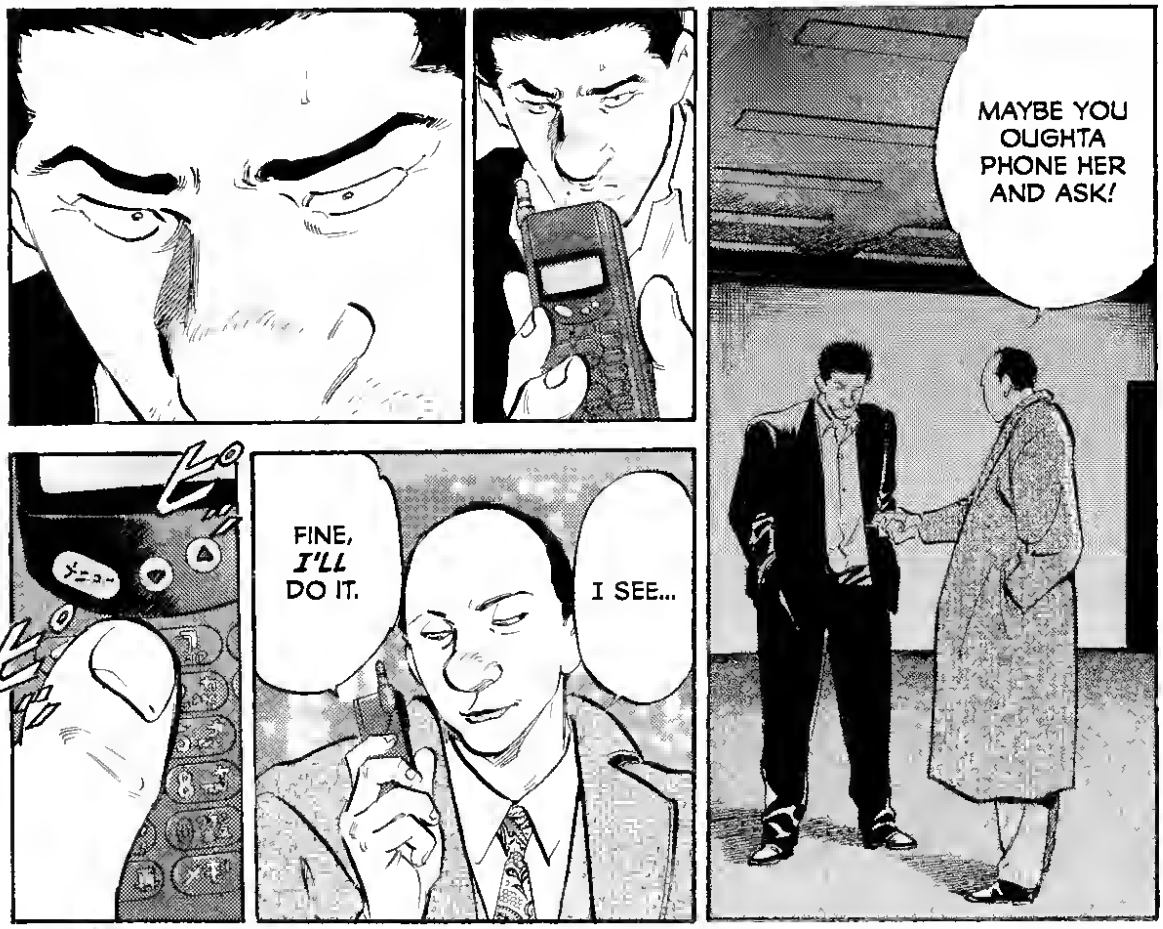

THIS BUILDING BELONGS TO A CERTAIN CORPORATION I HAVE SOME CONNECTIONS WITH.
SO WHAT DID YOU WANNA SHOW ME?
GO AHEAD.




WHAT THE HELL'S GOING ON HERE?!
LOOKS LIKE MISS YAYOI KUSAMA HAS LEFT THE HOTEL AND GONE BACK HOME, *HUH?*
MY, MY. THE RENT ON A CONDO IN A PRIME LOCATION LIKE THAT, IN MINATO WARD TO BOOT, CAN'T BE LESS THAN 1,500,000 YEN.
TEACHER MUST WRITE BEST SELLERS, *HUH?*

LET'S THINK HOW MUCH SHE GETS IN ROYALTIES...
I KNOW SHE'S REMARKABLY TALENTED, BUT I'VE ALSO HEARD THAT FIRST PRINTINGS OF HER BOOKS MOVE ABOUT THREE THOUSAND UNITS AND DON'T GET REPRINTED.
IT DOESN'T LOOK LIKE SHE HAS A WEALTHY LOVER AROUND...
NOW, HOW ON EARTH COULD SHE BE LIVING LIKE THAT, I WONDER?
TEN PERCENT OF THREE THOUSAND UNITS IN AUTHOR'S ROYALTIES...
360,000 ...
THE BEAST OF THE APOCALYPSE HARDCOVER COSTS 1,200 YEN...
黙示獣
草間やよい

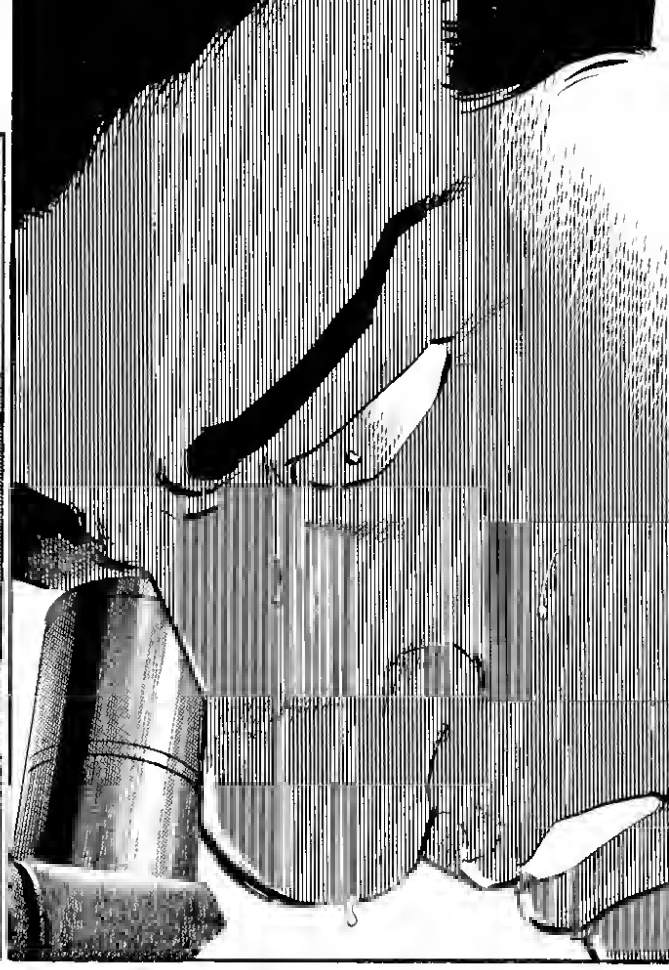
*FX: HYUK HUK HUK



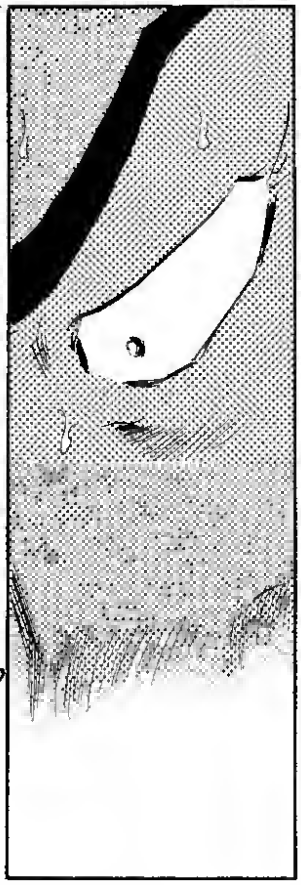
*FX: BEEP BEEP

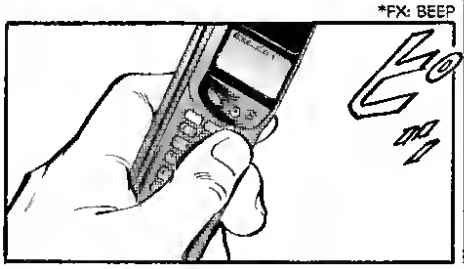
IT'S ME.
IS THAT YOU? SORRY FOR CALLING IN THE MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT.

IS WORK COMING ALONG WELL?



GOODBYE, THEN.
I'LL COME AND VISIT YOU SOON.




*FX: BEEP

OH, I SEE! IT LOOKS LIKE YOU'RE CONFUSED NOW ABOUT WHETHER TEACHER IS YOUR *ALLY* OR YOUR *ENEMY!*
HYUK HYUK...

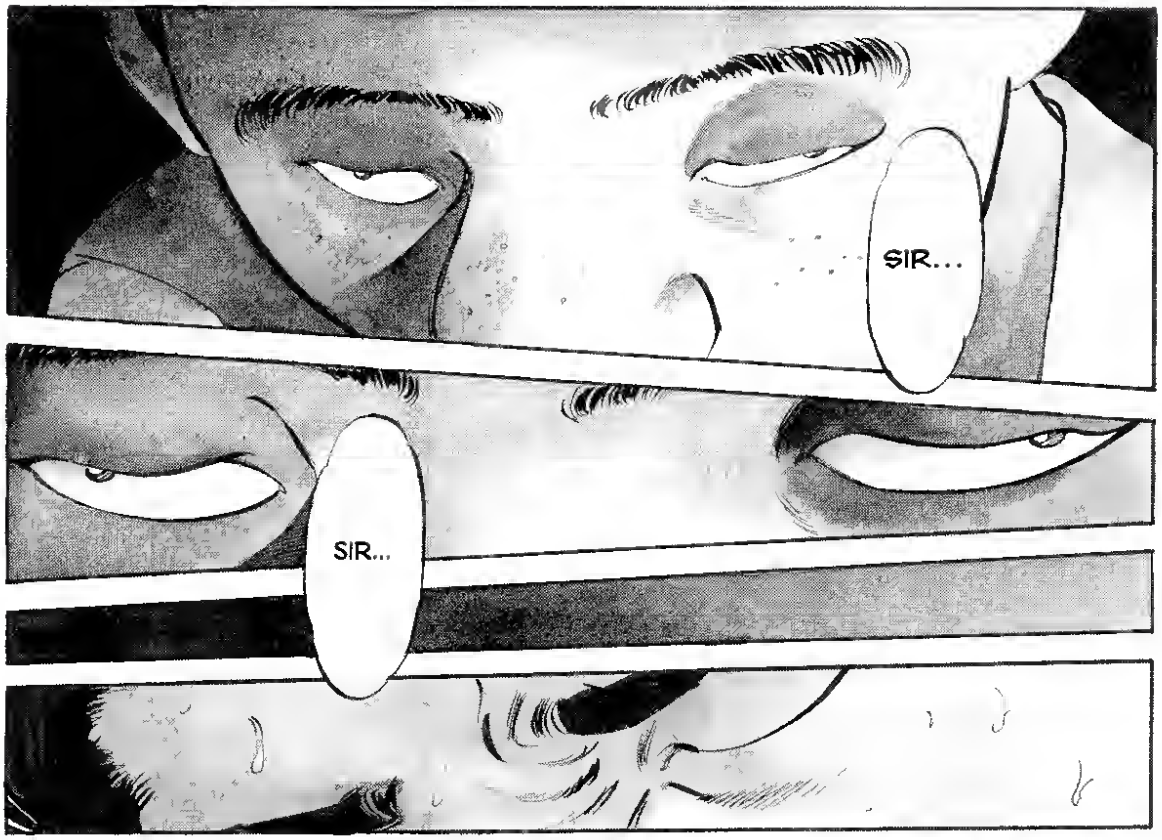
DOUBT: END

GOTO...
*FX: CLACK CLACK
カツ
カツ
SHIT!!

CHAPTER 48

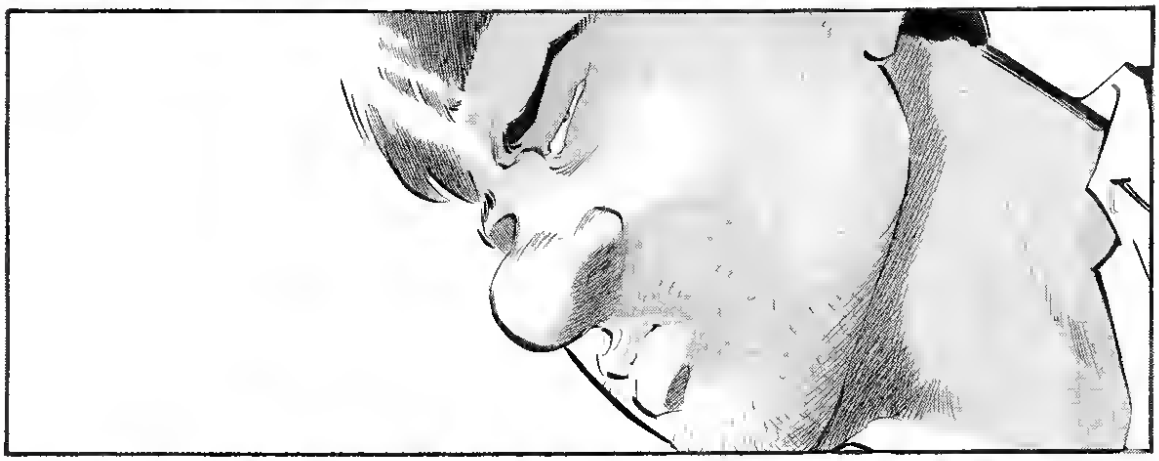
THE WAILING WALL

第48話●嘆きの壁

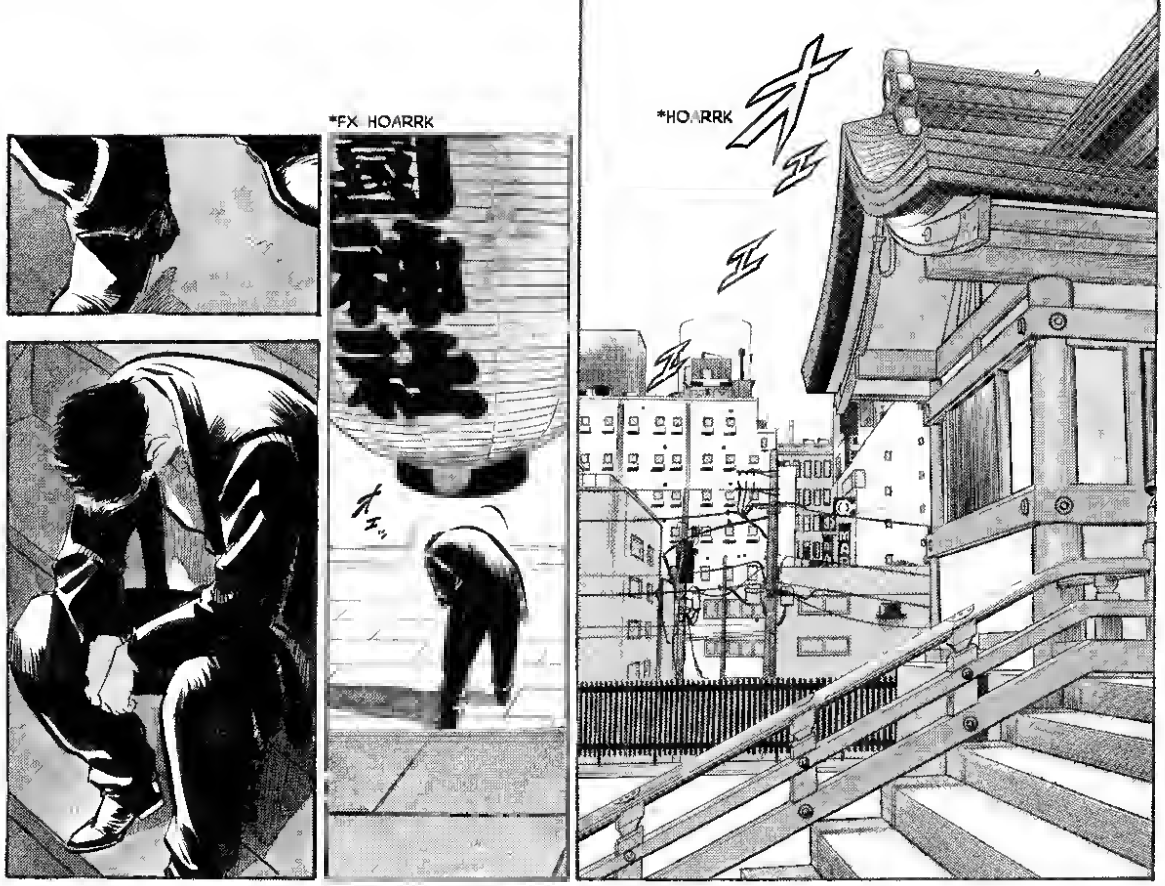

SIR...
SIR...

THAT'S WHAT YOU GET FOR DRINKING SO FAST!
HNNN...

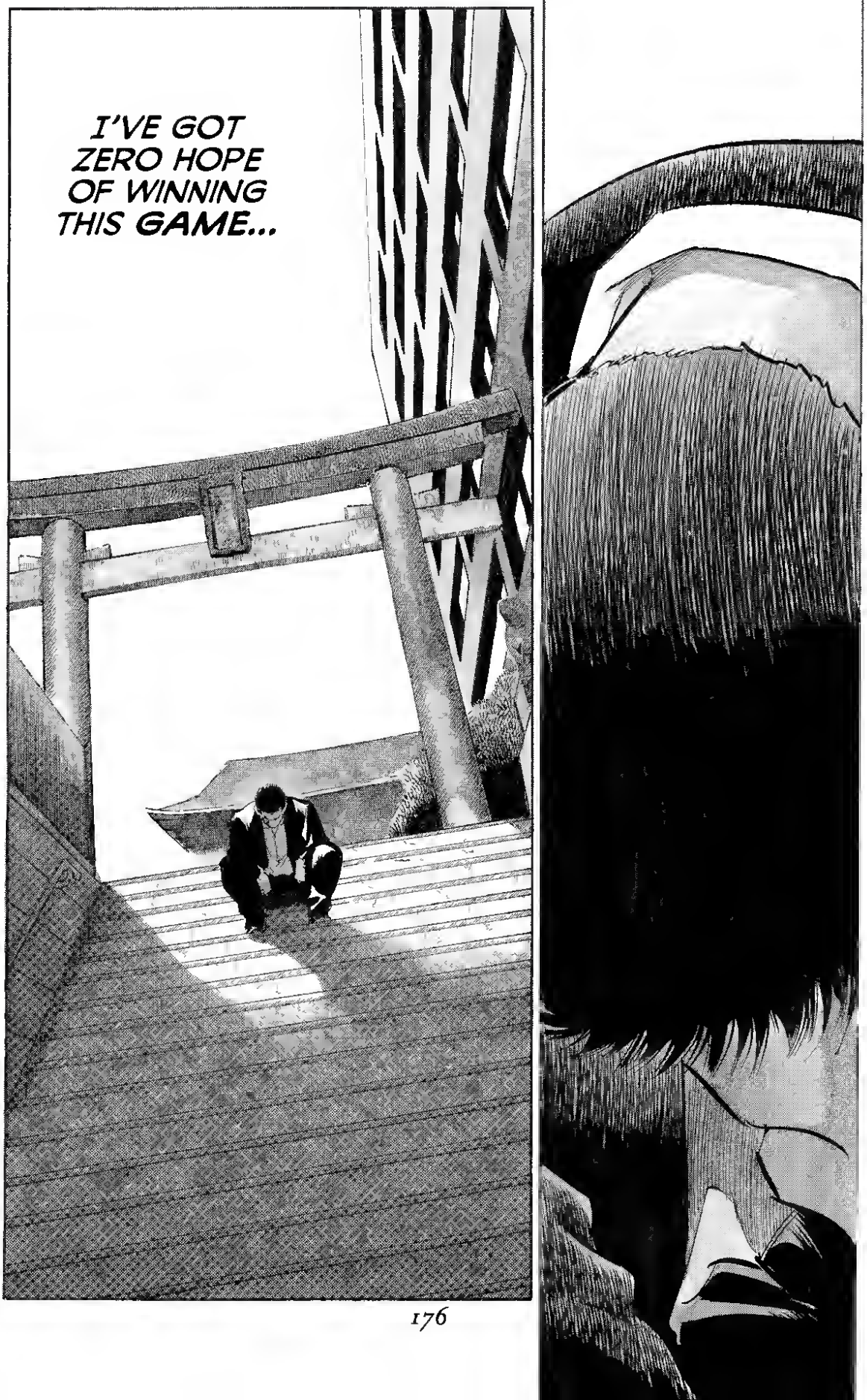
ケンタッキー
ホームキッチン



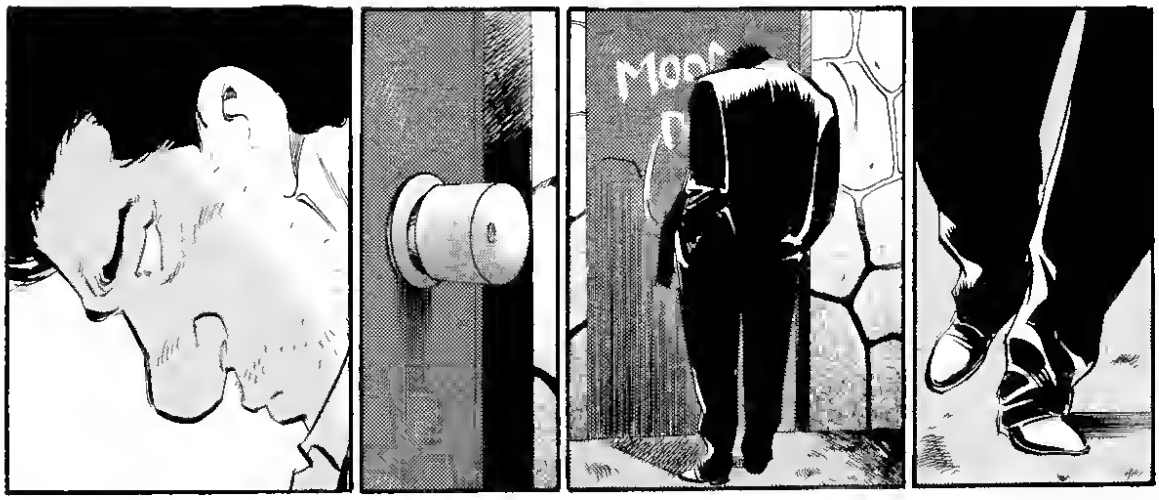
SKAL
麻雀
ロックンロール
ライト
スナック


*FX HOARRK
神社
*HOARRK

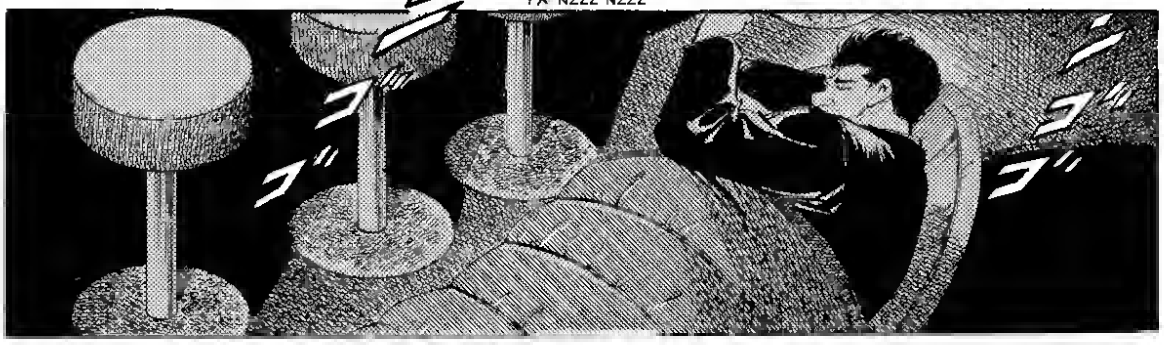
DOES THAT MEAN THAT ALIAS DOJIMA MIGHT BE SOMEONE OTHER THAT TAKAAKI KAKINUMA...?!
IT'S POSSIBLE YAYOI KUSAMA'S BEEN BOUGHT OUT...

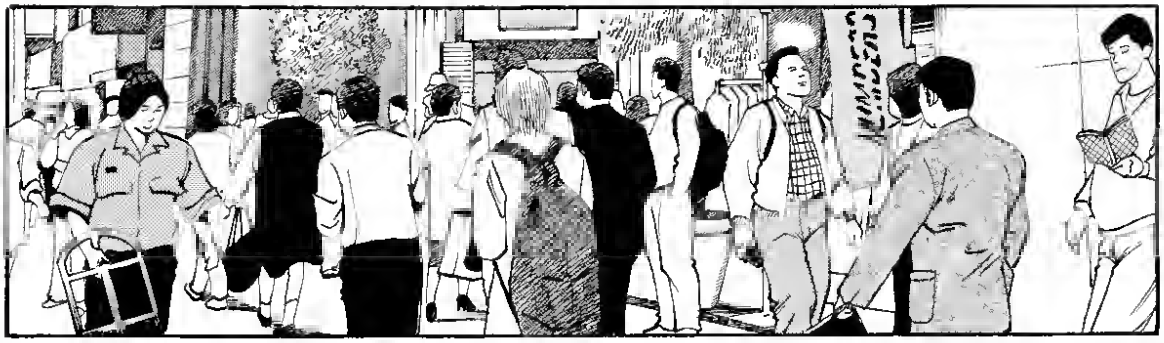

I'VE GOT ZERO HOPE OF WINNING THIS GAME...

*SIGN: SHINJUKU GOLDEN GAI



*FX: NZZZ NZZZ





*FX: NZZZZ

*FX: CLICK
*FX: CHAK

SORRY, MAN! IT'S GETTING TIME FOR ME TO OPEN THE PLACE UP!
HEH! THE GUY'S HOPELESS!
SORRY...

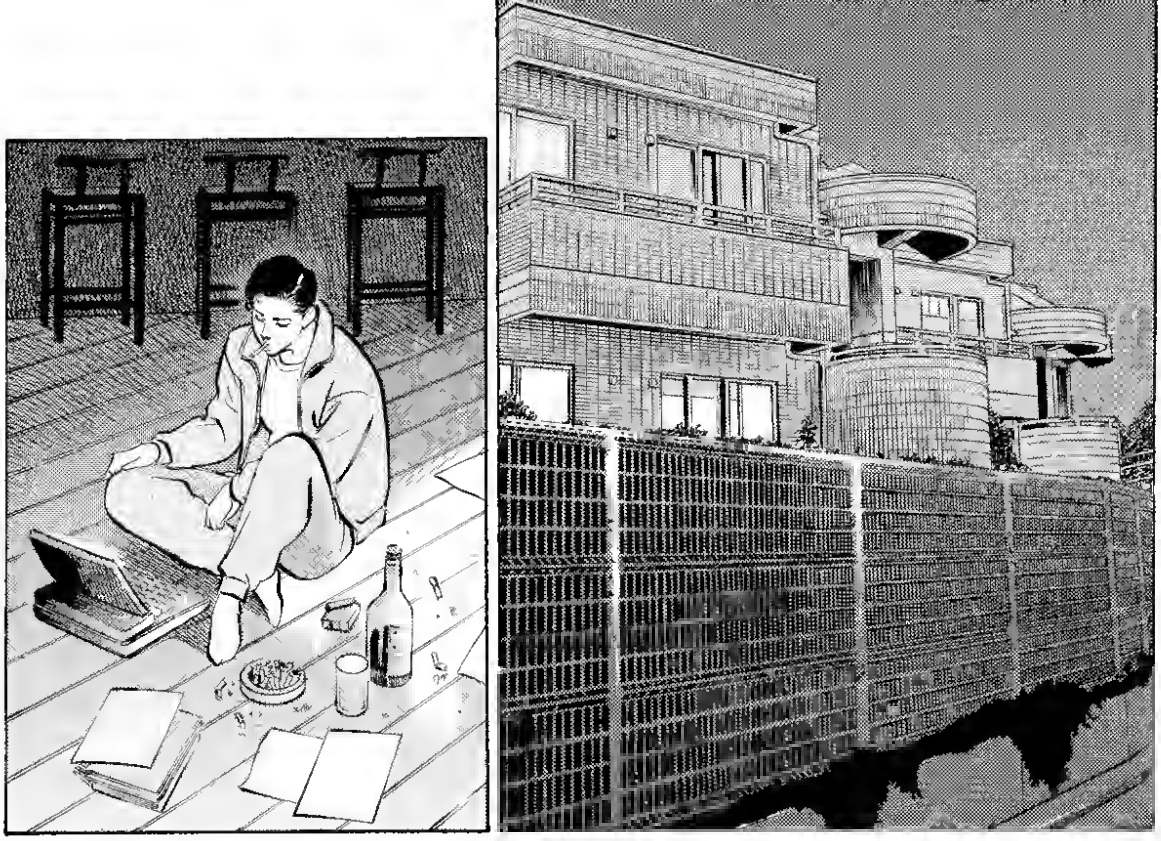
I HEAR YOU TOTALLY GOT YOUR ASS WHIPPED AT SOME NEW FIGHTING GAME AT THE ARCADE.
ALIAS DOJIMA WAS PRETTY FREAKED!
HUH ...?!
WHAT HAPPENED TO YOU LAST NIGHT?
TRIED TO DROWN YOUR SORROWS, HUH?
TOOK OFF IN A HUFF, THE STORY GOES...
*FX CHAK
OH, PLEASE, NO!!
YOU TWO ARE LIKE SOME MIDDLE-AGED PUFFY AMIYUMI.
HEY THERE! COME ON IN!
*FX: AHAHAHA

ほほえみのパートナー
31~35F

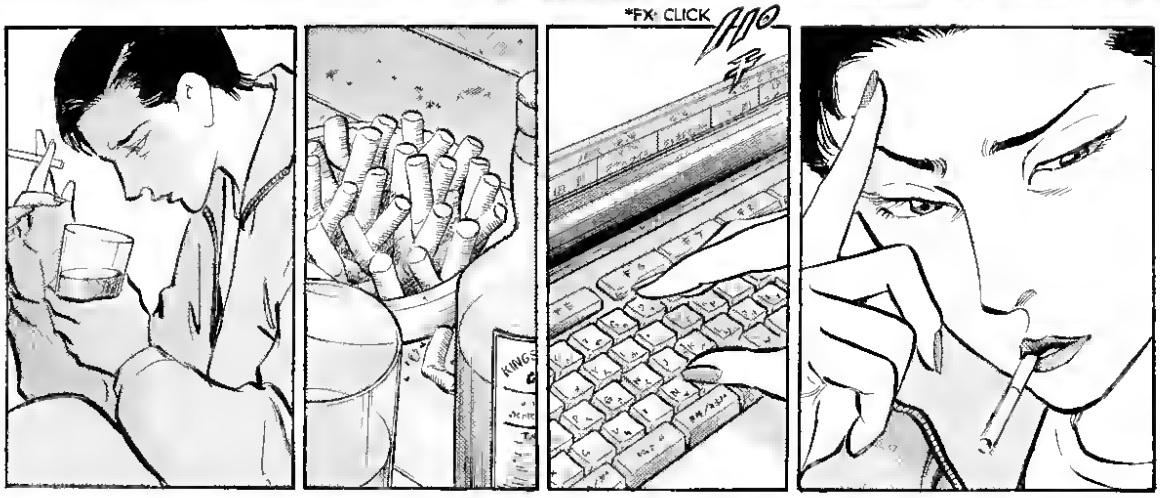
"GOTO..."
"I WANT YOU TO TELL ME ALL ABOUT YOUR ORDEALS..."
IS IT ALL A TRAP ...?!

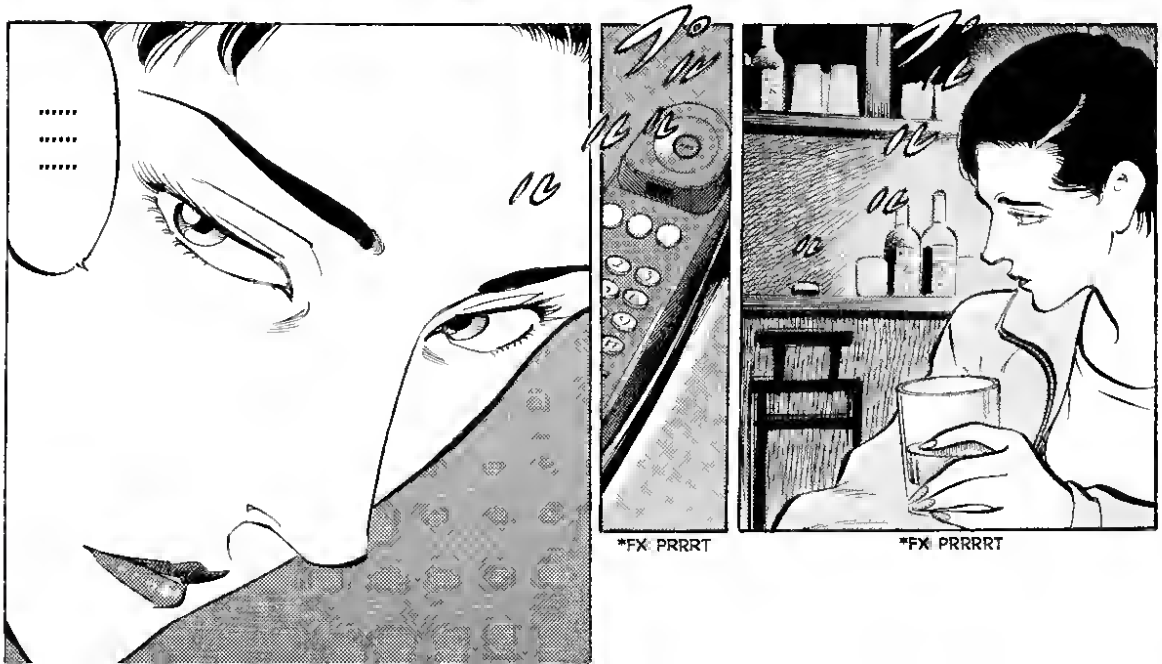
BUT IT DIDN'T LOOK LIKE...
...A PERFORMANCE TO ME.

"IF YOU REMEMBER ANYTHING, OR THE OTHER SIDE MAKES ANY MOVES..."
"...BE SURE TO CALL ME. USE A PUBLIC PHONE."
"THIS IS MY NUMBER WHEN I'M WORKING."
*FX: BWAH HAHAHA



*FX: CLICK





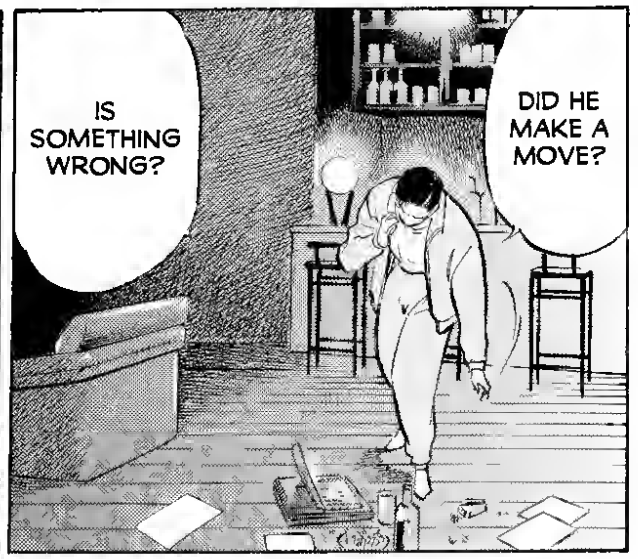
*FX: PRRRT

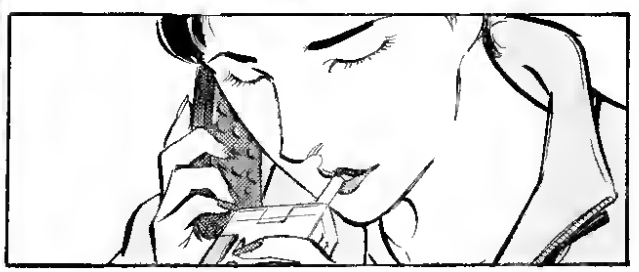
*FX: PRRRRT

:BEEP:
:PRR-RT:
:PRR-RT:
HELLO...?

SILENCE ALSO *SPEAKS.*
GOTO, RIGHT...?

TEACHER...
ARE YOU KEEPING SOMETHING FROM ME?


IS SOMETHING WRONG?
DID HE MAKE A MOVE?

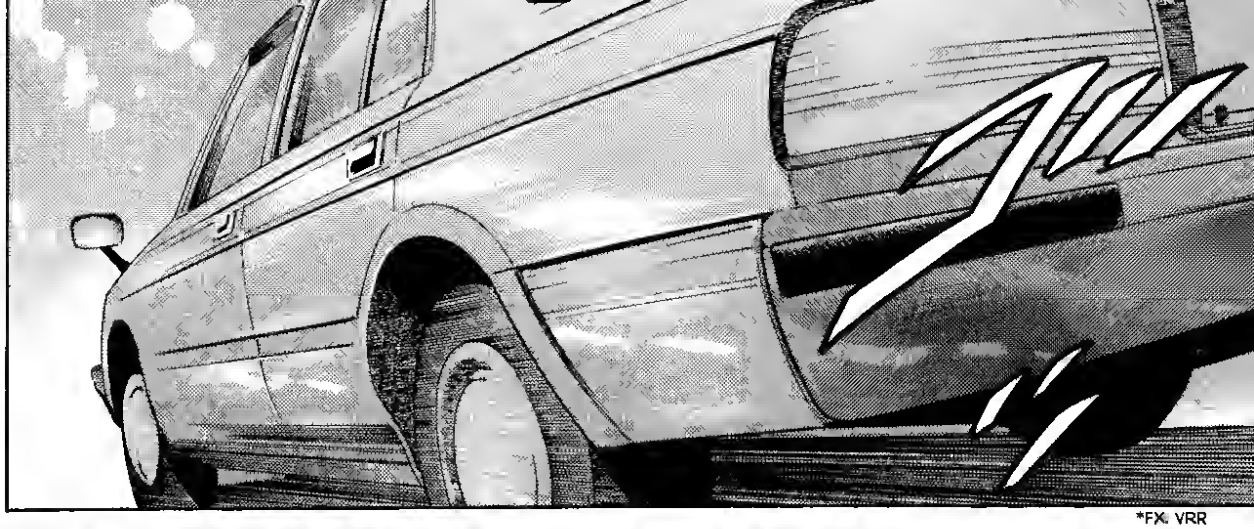


HUH?
MILD
SOUNDS LIKE THIS IS SOMETHING YOU CAN'T TALK ABOUT OVER THE PHONE...
WHY DON'T YOU COME TO MY PLACE?
I'LL BE WAITING IN MINAMI-AZABU IN MINATO WARD, NEAR THE FINNISH EMBASSY. YOU CAN BE HERE INSIDE THIRTY MINUTES BY TAXI...
UNDER-STOOD...

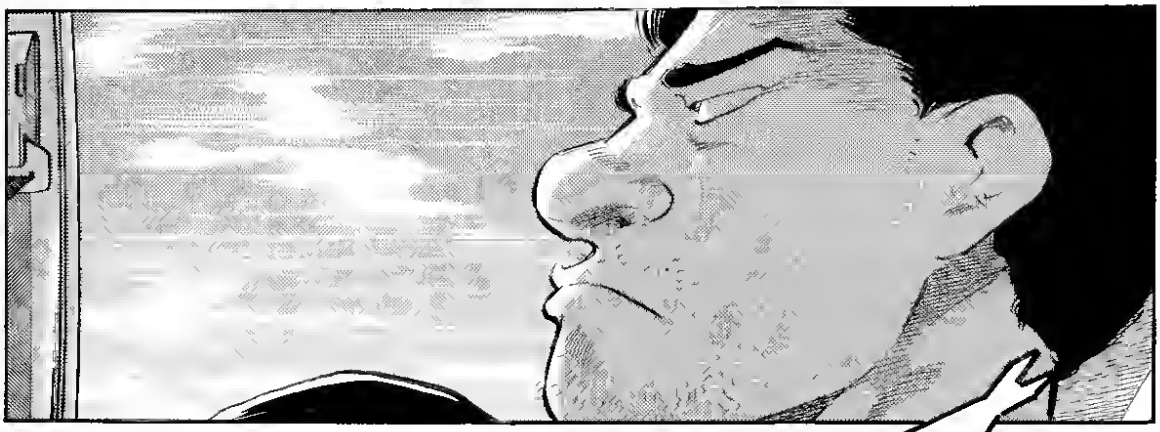
*FX: CHAK

NO PARKING

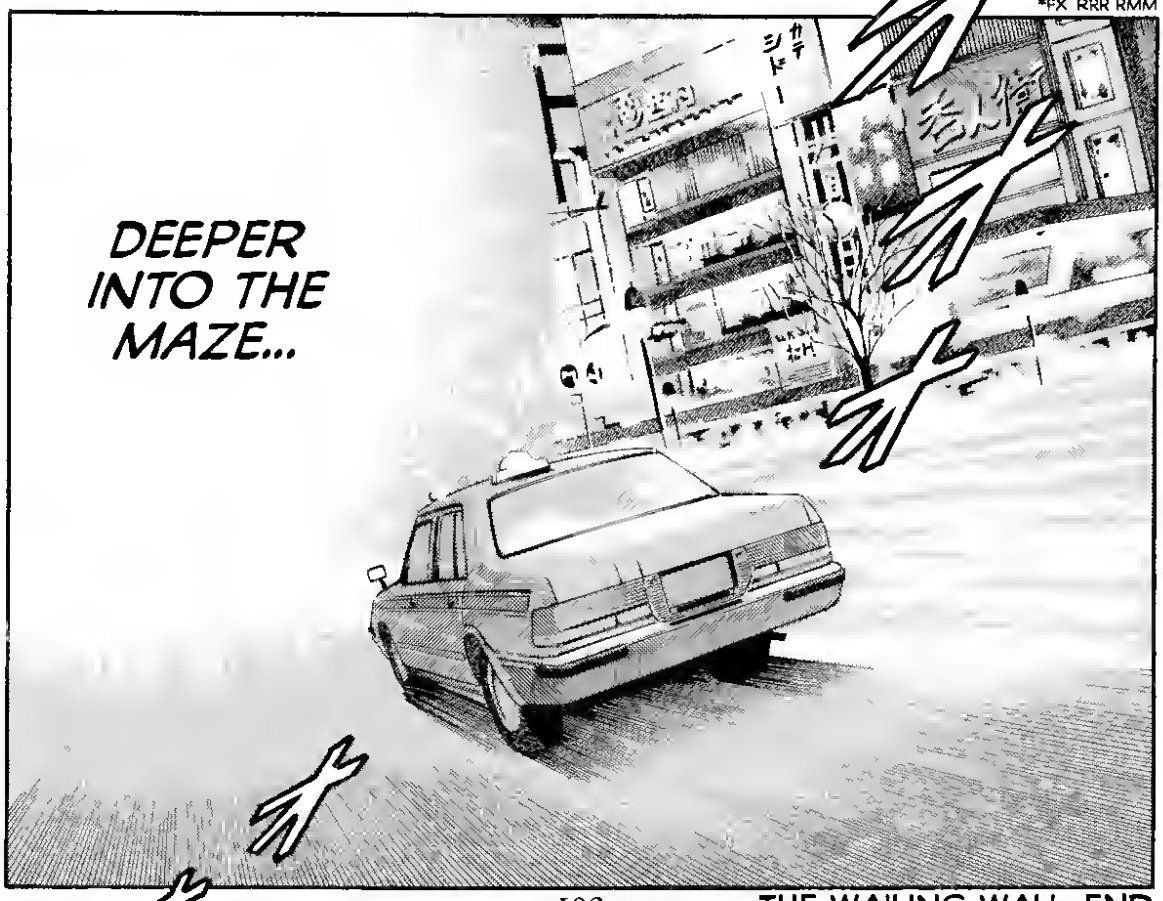
WHAT'LL SHE SAY WHEN I ASK HER HOW SHE CAN AFFORD THE EXCESSIVE RENT ON THAT PLACE ON THOSE TINY ROYALTIES SHE EARNS?!
BUT IF SHE'S REALLY ONE OF ALIAS DOJIMA'S PAWNS, I WOULDN'T HAVE EXPECTED HER TO INVITE ME TO HER PLACE...



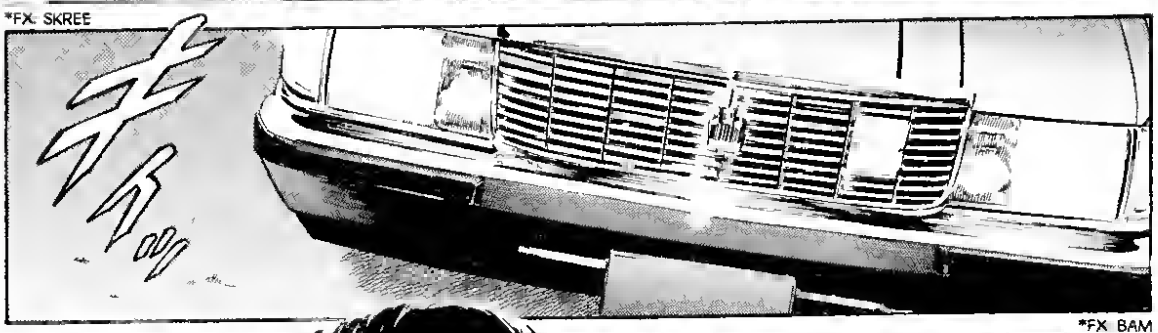
*FX: VRR



*FX: RRR RMM



*FX: SKREE

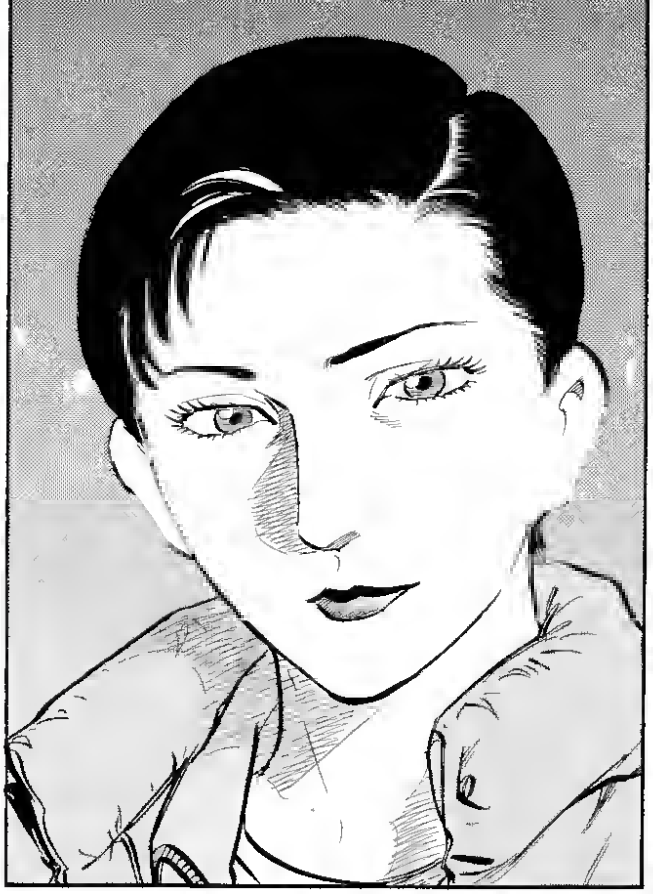


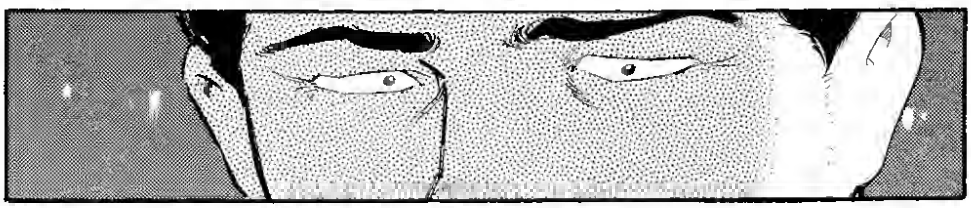
*FX: BAM

CHAPTER 49
THE AGENT

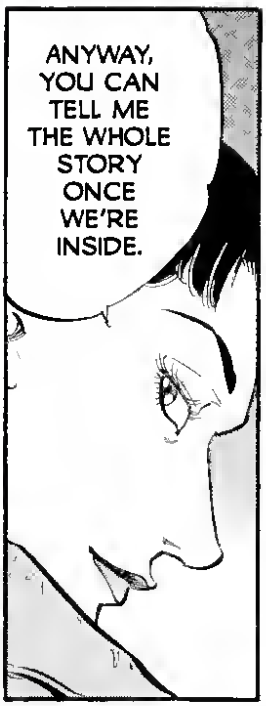
第49話◉エージェント

*EX: TAP TAP
ヒタ
ヒタ



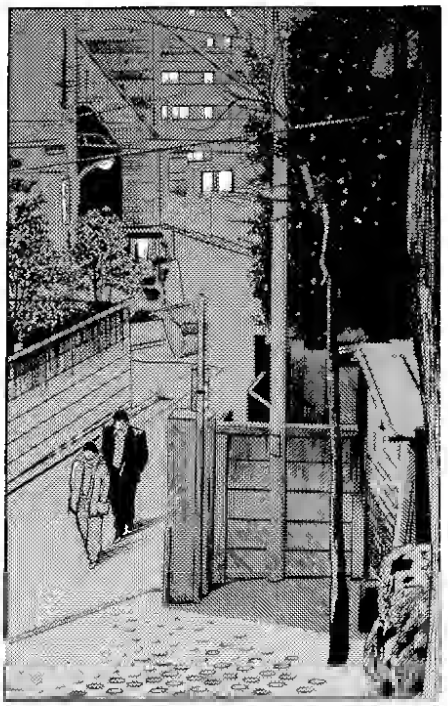


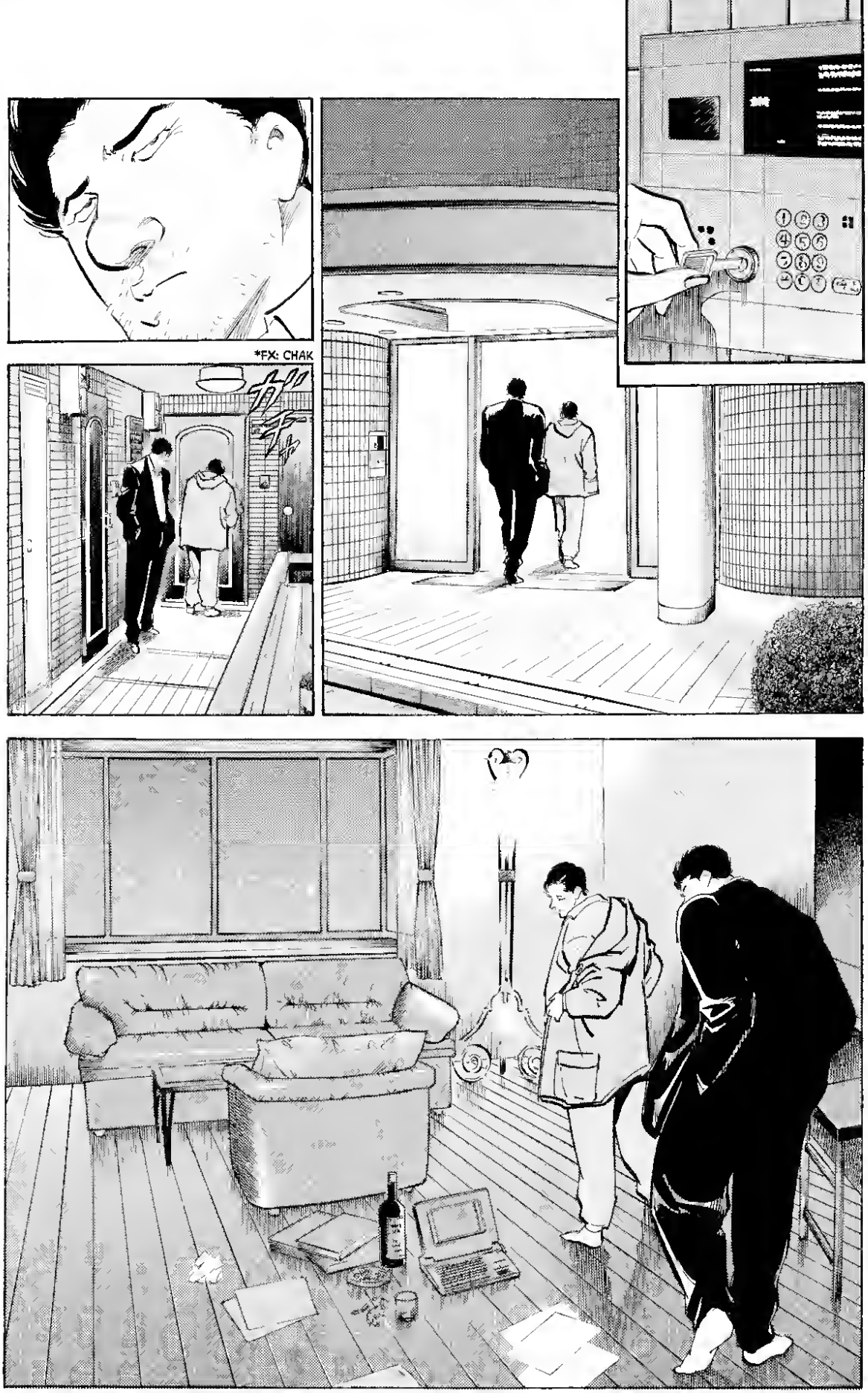
SHE DOESN'T HAVE THE EXPRESSION OF SOMEONE WHO'S TRYING TO DECEIVE ME...

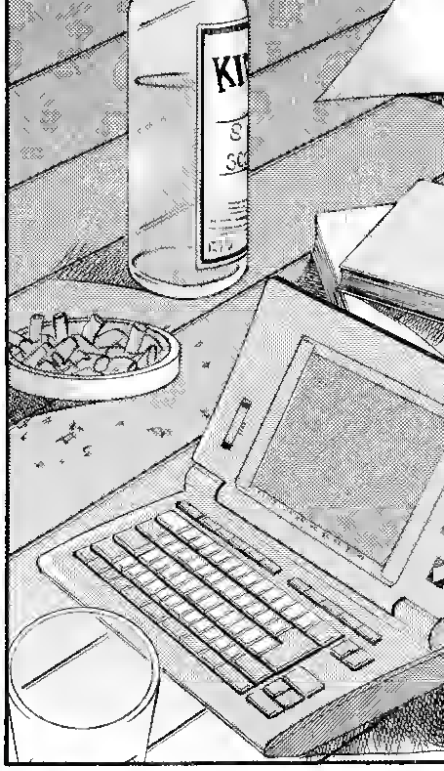

ANYWAY, YOU CAN TELL ME THE WHOLE STORY ONCE WE'RE INSIDE.

DID ALIAS DOJIMA CONTACT YOU RIGHT AFTER WE MET?

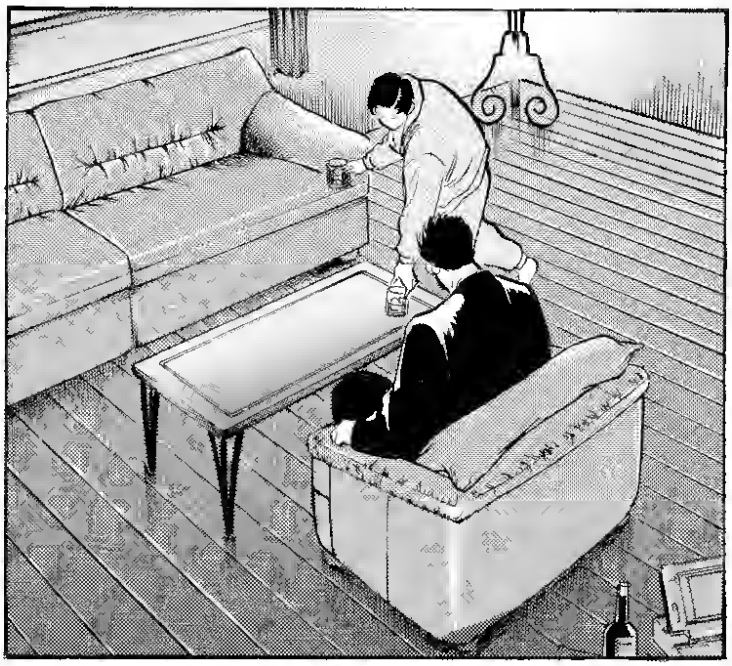
...
...



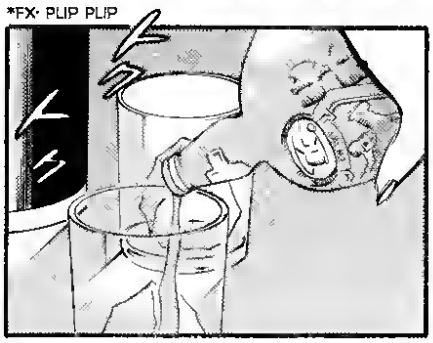

*FX: CHAK



*FX· RRK



*FX· PLIP PLIP



YOU ASKED ME ON THE PHONE BEFORE IF I WAS KEEPING ANYTHING FROM YOU...
DID ALIAS DOJIMA PUT SOME KIND OF PARANOID DOUBTS IN YOUR HEAD?!
DESPITE OUR AGE DIFFERENCE, I COULD SENSE YOUR SEX APPEAL EVEN AS A CHILD...
BUT IT SEEMS LIKE WE STILL HAVE THAT OLD TEACHER-STUDENT RELATIONSHIP, *HUH?*

WELL...?
SHINICHI GOTO, IT'S YOUR TURN TO ANSWER. WHAT ARE YOU SUSPICIOUS OF?
SO LET ME ASK YOU A QUESTION, AS YOUR TEACHER.
DID ALIAS DOJIMA GIVE YOU THAT IDEA?!
THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN YOUR INCOME AND LIFESTYLE DOESN'T ADD UP...
FOR ME TO LIVE IN A HIGH-CLASS CONDO LIKE THE KIND THE PRESIDENT OF SOME FOREIGN-OWNED COMPANY WOULD?
IS THAT SO WRONG?!
Y-YES.

READERS THESE DAYS ONLY RESPOND TO NOVELS FILLED WITH CLEVER TURNS-OF-PHRASE, NOT TO ARTISTS WHO NEED TO EXPRESS THEMSELVES.
YEAH. I'M *PROUD* OF THAT.
NO, IT'S JUST ...
YOU SAID YOU ONLY SELL ABOUT THREE THOUSAND OF THE FIRST PRINTINGS OF YOUR BOOKS.
THAT'S *ME.* SO THIS KOOKY AGENT APPEARED AND WOOED ME, SAYING I HAD "GREAT PROMISE."
THIS AGENT WANTED TO TRY AND SELL MY NOVELS IN THE ENGLISH-SPEAKING WORLD.
AND AFTER SIGNING THE CONTRACT ON A NEW HARDCOVER, I GOT PAID FIFTY MILLION YEN--*POW!*--JUST LIKE THAT.

THAT WAS *SIX MONTHS* BACK.
THE AGENT DIDN'T GIVE ME ANY KIND OF BRIEF AND SAID I HAD A ONE-YEAR DEADLINE.
...BUT IMAGINE *ME* GETTING ONE!
IN AMERICA, IT ONLY MAKES SENSE FOR BESTSELLING AUTHORS TO GET A MULTIMILLION-DOLLAR CONTRACT FOR A BOOK...
...BUT I DECIDED TO TRY LIFE WITH A 1.5 MILLION YEN PLACE TO WORK IN AND TOP-CLASS LIQUOR TO DRINK.
MAYBE IT WAS THE WHIMSY OF A WRITER WHO'D GOTTEN MORE MONEY THAN SHE'D EVER DREAMED OF...

YOU THINK THE *AGENT* WAS ONE OF ALIAS DOJIMA'S *PUPPETS...?!*
THAT'S *IMPOS-SIBLE...!*
!!

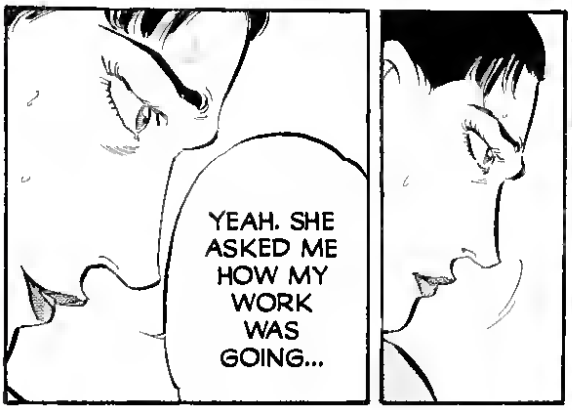
DOESN'T THIS FEEL LIKE A *REVERSE VERSION* OF HIM HAVING PAID THREE HUNDRED MILLION TO HAVE ME LOCKED UP TEN YEARS AGO?
I'M A LITTLE DISAP-POINTED IN YOU.
FIGURING I'D MAKE CONTACT WITH YOU SOONER OR LATER, HE JUST SPED THINGS UP TO MAKE HIS *GAME* MORE INTERESTING.
WE KNOW HE'S HAD PLASTIC SURGERY, BUT...
...AS HIS FORMER TEACHER--NO--DIDN'T YOUR INSTINCTS AS A *WRITER* HELP YOU SEE THROUGH HIM?

THAT MAN WAS TAKAAKI KAKINUMA!
BUT...
...THE AGENT WAS A WOMAN!

SHE'S AN *AMERICAN* OF JAPANESE DESCENT... WEALTHY...
I DIDN'T ASK HER AGE, 'CAUSE SHE'S A WOMAN, BUT...

...YOU GOT A PHONE CALL FROM THIS AGENT, DIDN'T YOU?
LAST NIGHT...

...ANY WAY YOU LOOK AT IT, SHE'S OLD!


YEAH. SHE ASKED ME HOW MY WORK WAS GOING...

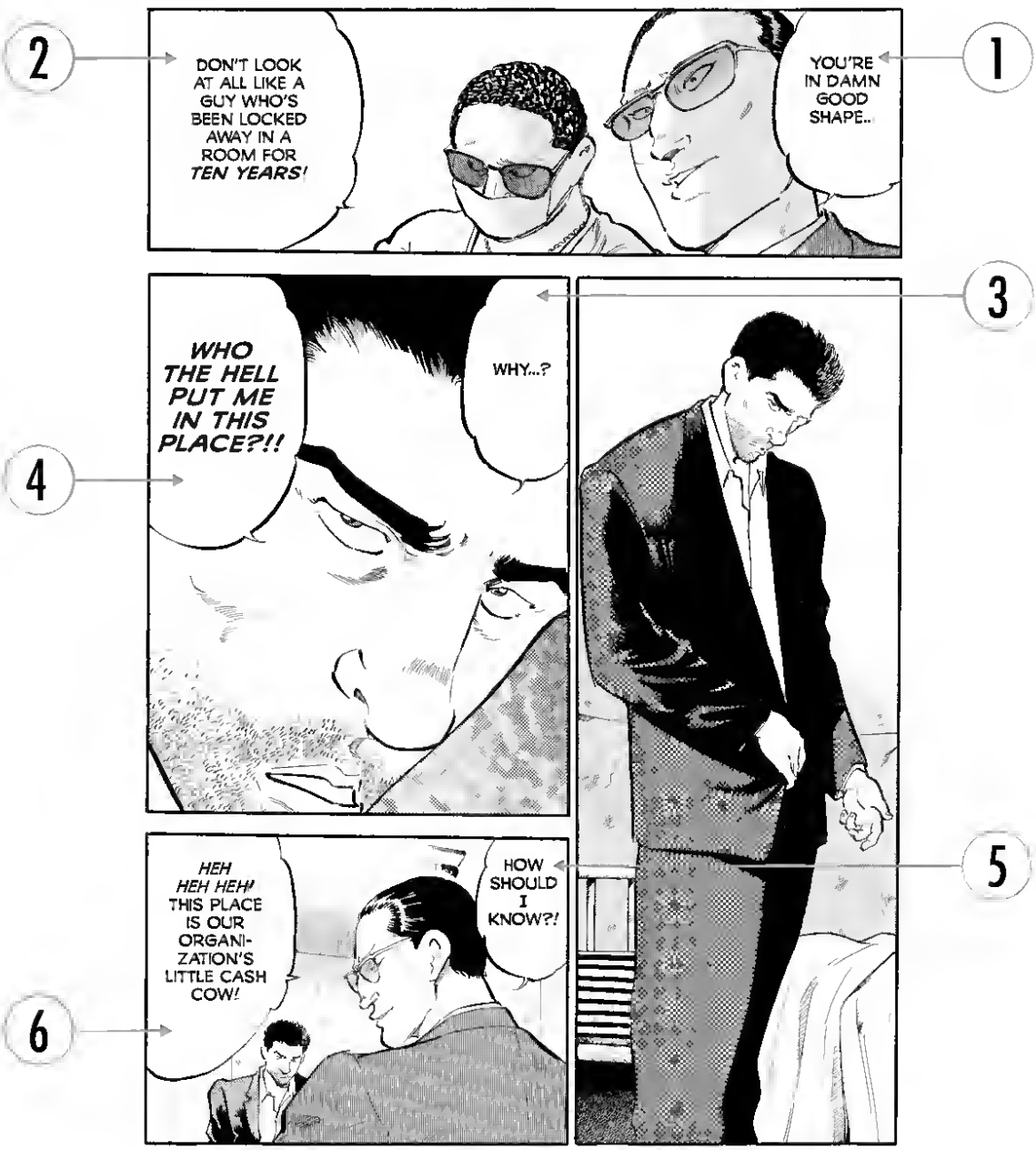
THAT WAS KAKI-NUMA !!

SHE HAS A LOW VOICE, FOR A WOMAN...
...BUT SHE SAID IT WAS AN AFTER-EFFECT OF *SURGERY* ON HER THROAT...

TAKAAKI KAKINUMA, DISGUISED AS AN OLD WOMAN...

STOP! THIS IS THE BACK OF THE BOOK!

This manga callectian is translated inta English, but arranged in right-ta-left reading farmat ta maintain the artwark's visual arientatian as ariginally drawn and published in Japan. If yau've never read camics this way before, take a laak at the diagram belaw ta give yaurself an idea af haw ta ga abaut it. Basically, yau'll be starting in the upper right-hand carner, and will read each ward ballaan and panel maving right-ta-left. It may take a little getting used ta, but yau shauld get the hang af it very quickly. Have fun!


2
DON'T LOOK AT ALL LIKE A GUY WHO'S BEEN LOCKED AWAY IN A ROOM FOR TEN YEARS!
YOU'RE IN DAMN GOOD SHAPE..
1
3
WHO THE HELL PUT ME IN THIS PLACE?!!
WHY...?
4
HEH HEH HEH! THIS PLACE IS OUR ORGANI-ZATION'S LITTLE CASH COW!
HOW SHOULD I KNOW?!
5
6

TEN YEARS LOCKED AWAY IN A private prisan with anly a TV set and a jailer's voice far campany—but why? What had Gata dane ta deserve this unexplained farced isalatian, and why was he unceremaniausly released, again withaut explanatian? Cauld this decade of torment really be abaut a schoolyard grudge? Is a childhood vendetta warth the millions of yen required to imprison a man for a decade? And is giving the dangerous Goto a chance to pursue his revenge just another opportunity to watch him twist on a hook?

Old Boy is an intense, bare-knuckled urban thriller in the tradition of *Pulp Fiction* and *Payback* and is the manga that inspired the critically acclaimed 2003 film from director Chan-wook Park that took the Grand Jury prize at the 2004 Cannes Film Festival.

This collection is translated into English but oriented in right-to-left reading format, as originally published.

オールドボーイ

Will Eisner
COMIC INDUSTRY AWARD
2007 BEST U.S. EDITION OF
FOREIGN MATERIAL—JAPAN

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OLD BOY

GRAPHIC NOVEL / MANGA / CRIME

FOR READERS 18+
FOR MATURE READERS